

Moving Towards Inclusive Education: How Inclusive Education is Understood, Experienced and Enacted in Nepali Higher Secondary Schools.

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Dedications

To my father and mother

for opening the light of my eyes and the strength of my heart and soul

To my wife and my son

for supporting me throughout this journey, in good and worst of times and

for teaching me unconditional love, hope and resilience

Declaration of Authorship

I hereby declare that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree of this or any other university or other institution.

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Abstract

Inclusive education is the provision of free quality universal education for all children. This includes children who are considered marginalised and oppressed, ethnic minorities and disabled. In line with the philosophy of global inclusive education, the government of Nepal has endorsed and enacted different policies to support the principles of inclusive education. However, a significant portion of marginalised and disabled students are yet to gain access to education in Nepal. In addition, many children, who attend school do not experience quality education and do not complete primary education. There is no documented information available about inclusive education practices in secondary contexts or of the experiences of disabled children attending secondary education in Nepal. This thesis reports a study that investigated how inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted by government officers, school administrators, teachers with and without disability, parents, and students with and without disability in two public higher secondary schools in Nepal. The study also explored how inclusive education policies are implemented by school principals, teachers and students in the regular school setting and how teachers perceive and understand curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and disability in particular.

The study utilised a “disability studies in education” framework underpinned by a social constructionist epistemology. Within this thesis, discourses of disabilities, a theoretical model of pedagogical discourse and alternative models of teaching-learning were utilised as a conceptual framework for analysis of findings. Qualitative research data collected and analysed included interviews, observations, and the analyses of policy and school documents. Two school administrators, four government officers, 14 teachers with and without disabilities, 14 parents, and 14 students with and without disabilities were selected as research participants. A total of 48 semi-structured interviews and two focus-group interviews were recorded and analysed. A total of 28 classroom teaching-learning activities

were observed with 14 teachers. An analytical model for qualitative data analysis (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016) was used to analyse and interpret the data.

Findings indicated that various discourses of disabilities guided Nepali inclusive education policies, classroom practices, and participants' narratives. Nepali inclusive education policies contain contradictory and confusing views, which appeared to be primarily guided by a medical discourse of disability. Although the government of Nepal endorses equity, equality, and social justice for all people, Nepali society still interprets disability as a result of negative *Karma* which directly leads to discrimination, stigmatisation, categorization and exclusion for disabled students.

Multiple factors were identified as barriers to implementing the inclusive pedagogy in Nepal's secondary school classrooms. These included a lack of trained teachers, inaccessible infrastructure, limited budgets, and limited teaching resources. The attitudes of teachers and parents towards disability were mostly negative. These appeared to be influenced by socio-cultural beliefs about disability, curriculum constraints, and contradictory policies. As a result, participants constructed a dominant model of teaching: separate curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment models for students with disabilities. However, this study also found that some teachers celebrated disability by applying connective, collaborative and inclusive pedagogy for all students in their day-to-day teaching and learning practices.

On the basis of findings, this study concludes that there is an implementation gap between inclusive policy and inclusive practices. Teachers constructed disability through a medical and religious discourse of disability and viewed disability as an individual problem rather than a social issue. To minimise this implementation gap between educational policies and inclusive practices, this study has suggested implications of this study.

Table of Contents

Dedications	i
Declaration of Authorship.....	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	vi
Table of Contents	viii
List of Tables ..	xii
List of Figures	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 My interest in this research	1
1.3 The focus of the thesis.....	4
1.4 Setting the context.....	5
1.4.1 Educational status of children with disabilities	5
1.4.2 Nepal's education policy context	6
1.4.3 The socio-cultural context	10
1.5 Disability Studies in Education (DSE).....	13
1.6 The development of inclusive education.....	14
1.6.1 Exclusion and inclusion in the context of inclusive education.....	14
1.6.2 Inclusive education	15
1.6.3 Perspectives about inclusive education	17
1.6.4 Origin and historical development of inclusive education	20
1.7 Normal.....	23
1.8 Identity	23
1.9 Belonging	24
1.10 Statement of the problem	25
1.11 Rationale.....	26
1.12 Research questions	27
1.13 Language	27
1.14 Meaning of some key terms in this study.....	28
1.15 Summary	30
1.16 Structure of the thesis.....	30
Chapter 2: Literature review	33
2.1 Introduction	33
2.2 Social constructionism	33
2.3 Conceptual framework	36
2.3.1 Discourse of disability	37
2.3.2 A theoretical model of pedagogical discourse.....	39
2.3.3 Alternative models of teaching-learning	39
2.3.4 Exploring inclusive pedagogy	40

2.4 Barriers to inclusionary practices	41
2.5 Teachers' understanding of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment	42
2.5.1 Curriculum.....	43
2.5.2 Pedagogy	44
2.5.3 Assessment	45
2.6 Teachers' role.....	47
2.7 Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) training	47
2.8 School culture.....	48
2.9 Summary	50
Chapter 3: Methodology	51
3.1 Introduction	51
3.2 Qualitative research and interpretive methodology	51
3.3 Research design.....	54
3.4 Identification and selection of schools and participants.....	56
3.5 Methods.....	58
3.5.1 Research tools for data collection.....	58
3.6 Data analysis and interpretation	68
3.6.1 Discovery phase.....	69
3.6.2 Coding phase	71
3.6.3 Discounting phase.....	72
3.7 Trustworthiness and credibility of the research	72
3.7.1 Credibility	73
3.7.2 Representation and reflexivity.....	75
3.8 Ethical issues in research.....	77
Storage of data	78
3.9 Limitations of the study.....	79
3.10 Summary	80
Chapter 4: Understanding disability through discourse.....	81
4.1 Introduction	81
4.2 Fulcher's discourse of disabilities	82
4.2.1 Understanding disability as a medical issue in Nepal	83
4.2.2 Neoliberal approach to manage disability in Nepal.....	92
4.2.3 Everyday understanding of disability in Nepal	100
4.2.4 Understanding disability as a social issue in Nepal.....	109
4.3 Summary	113
Chapter 5: "No Ratta-No Learning": Understanding teachers' beliefs and understanding of teaching and learning	116
5.1 Introduction	116
5.2 A theoretical model of pedagogical discourse	116
5.3 Teaching and learning practices in the classroom.....	120
5.3.1 Educability of students	121
5.3.2 Explanation of educational failure.....	125

5.3.3 School responses.....	128
5.3.4 Theory of teaching expertise	133
5.3.5 Assessment model	138
5.3.6 Curriculum model.....	141
5.4 Summary	145
Chapter 6: Moving towards inclusive child-friendly school culture.....	147
6.1 Introduction	147
6.2 Conceptual framework	148
6.2.1 A sense of belonging	150
6.2.2 Empower students for democracy	153
6.2.3 Inclusive pedagogy	157
6.2.4 Teachers' beliefs, knowledge and understanding of learners.....	164
6.2.5 Supported learning.....	168
6.2.6 Network	169
6.2.7 School culture	171
6.3 Summary	174
Chapter 7: Discussion and conclusion	177
7.1 Introduction	177
7.2 Summary of the findings chapters.....	178
7.3 Findings.....	180
7.3.1 Tensions and contradictory policies	180
7.3.2 Complex procedural processes for resource funding applications	182
7.3.3 Neo-liberal approach to education.....	184
7.3.4 Impact of caste hierarchy and socio-cultural traditions on educating students	185
7.3.5 Barriers to inclusionary practices	186
7.3.6 Inadequacy of resources and inaccessible infrastructure.....	189
7.3.7 Approaches to teaching and learning processes	189
7.3.8 Teachers' understanding of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.....	190
7.3.9 Teachers' roles.....	193
7.3.10 Lack of Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) training in inclusive education.....	193
7.3.11 School culture	194
7.4 Conclusions	195
7.5 Implications of this research	196
7.5.1 Policy.....	197
7.5.2 Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.....	198
7.5.3 School practices	199
7.5.4 Socio-cultural practices	199
7.6 Suggestion for future research.....	200
7.7 Lessons learned	201
7.8 Final thoughts.....	204
References	205

Glossary: List of Nepali words used in this thesis.....	223
Abbreviations	225
Appendices	234
Appendix 1: Timeline.....	234
Appendix 2: Information sheet for government officer	235
Appendix 3: Information sheet for school administrator	238
Appendix 4: Information sheet for school teacher	241
Appendix 5: Information sheet for parent/caregiver	244
Appendix 6: Information sheet for students	246
Appendix 7: Information sheet of parent permission for student participation	250
Appendix 8: Consent form for government officer.....	252
Appendix 9: Consent form for school administrator.....	254
Appendix 10: Consent form for teacher	256
Appendix 11: Consent form for parent/caregiver	258
Appendix 12: Consent form for student	260
Appendix 13: Consent form for parent permission	261
Appendix 14: Classroom observation	262
Appendix 15: Field note	264
Appendix 16: Semi-structured and focus-group prompts and interview guidelines	268
Appendix 17: Themes	270
Appendix 18: Ethical approval letter	271

List of Tables

Table 3.1: Total number of research participants	58
Table 3.2: Summary of data collection tools	59
Table 3.3: Summary of consulted documents.....	67
Table 4.1: Category of disability	86
Table 4.2: Summary of key ideas in the chapter.....	115
Table 5.1: Skidmore's two forms of pedagogical discourse	117
Table 5.2: Summary of key ideas in the chapter.....	146
Table 6.1: Summary of key themes in the chapter.....	176

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: The Caste Hierarchy in Nepal (1854 Muluki Ain/Civil Code)	11
Figure 4.1: Understanding disability through discourses	83

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis reports a study that critically examined issues of Inclusive Education in Nepali public higher secondary schools. This first chapter presents the rationale for my interest in the research project and provides background information essential to understanding the study. A description of the Disability Studies in Education (DSE) lens used to critically examine issues during the study is also provided in this chapter. Background information about Nepal's education policies and practices for all students and students with disabilities is also included. The meaning of exclusion, inclusion, inclusive education, the historical development of inclusive education, language, normal, identity and belonging are explained. Furthermore, inclusive education is discussed in the context of human rights, social justice and disability management. Finally, I provide a detailed summary of the focus of the study: the educational status of children with disabilities, the guiding research questions, and an overall outline of the thesis.

1.2 My interest in this research

This section explains my experiences and interests in inclusive education by highlighting my personal schooling and professional experiences. I was born in the Bardiya district of Nepal. This is located in the mid-western development region of the country. I attended a local public school in my village from age 5 to 12-years-old (grades one to seven). Then, I studied grade eight and nine at a public school in Nepaljanj city. This was approximately 30 kilometres from my home village. After grade nine, I enrolled in grade ten in my local village school where I graduated with my School Leaving Certificate (SLC).

An early influence on my career was a teacher in my village school who taught our compulsory English class - Arjun sir¹. His teaching practice involved a more traditional approach as opposed to more student-centred teaching and learning strategies. For example, he emphasized rote learning. This was highlighted one day when my friend Sujan asked for some advice on essay writing. Arjun sir scolded him and said it was his fault that he did not pay attention in class. He stated that "*Ratta*"/rote was the main advice for essay writings. Arjun sir and other teachers encouraged students by saying, 'No *Ratta*-No Learning'. They had the belief that learning was only possible through rote learning. Students had to retell him exactly what he taught us in the classroom. I recognised that Arjun sir was skilled at English, but I did not view him as an effective teacher. Another example was when my friend Ranjit told Arjun sir that he was unable to understand the short story 'Tales of Aesop'. I hoped Arjun sir would clarify this for Ranjit. Instead of making it clear, he scolded and punished Ranjit by catching his ear. I was very sad that day and promised myself I would be a different teacher in the future. After graduating from my SLC, I enrolled in a Proficiency Certificate Level (PCL) in Education. I then went on to complete a Bachelor's degree in Education (B.Ed.) and Master's degree in Education (M.Ed.) from Tribhuvan University. I also experienced an unforgettable event during my university life.

There were around 500 students enrolled in the M.Ed. Programme at Tribhuvan University, with around 150 students regularly on campus. Among them, a student, Gopal, who I recall as a polite and able student, also had a visual impairment. One day, groups of students were sitting on the ground during a lecture break. Our group were talking about language acquisition and learning. A colleague, Badri, inquired "How does a person with a disability learn language?" He connected the idea of language learning with a disabled student. Another student, Suman, responded that disabled students learned the same way as

¹ All names presented in this thesis are pseudonyms

students without disabilities. Badri questioned how a student with a visual impairment learned. Suman replied they learned through the use of braille script. Badri connected it to Gopal's competency, "What would Gopal do if he graduated with a M.Ed. in the future?" Rajendra commented that what Gopal did in the future was not our business. That day, I asked myself, why did Badri question Gopal's competency? Why did Badri want to compare Gopal's learning ability to non-disabled students? Why did Badri ask about Gopal's future after graduating? Why did Badri not ask about other non-disabled students' future after study?

After graduation, I worked as a lecturer at Gramin Adarsha Multiple Campus (GAMC) Balaju, Kathmandu. There were more than 100 students in an undergraduate class. Among them, Kapil was a student with a visual impairment who sat on the first bench of the classroom so he could listen carefully to the teacher. I asked Kapil if he understood what teachers taught in the class. He told me that it was difficult for him to comprehend and understand everything. I wondered how this related to the fact that the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment were not accessible to disabled students. This meant that Kapil had to work much harder than other students just to access the resources, such as the library, books and other learning resources. At the time, there was some research on inclusive education in Nepal, but this material did not inform me about the experience of disabled students in Nepal and reported findings were inconsistent with my experiences.

Another experience that shaped my understanding was a casual observation during a visit to provide teachers' professional development training in the Sindupalchok district. During a school day, I saw five children playing on the street. I stopped and asked, "Why are you not going to school?" At first, they did not respond. After that, I offered them chocolate and talked with them very politely. They smiled and took it. Then, I asked them "Do you like to go to school?" The following conversation took place-

Children: “Yes. We love to go to school.”

Me: “Why do not you like to go to school today?”

Children: “We do not like to go to school because everyone is teasing us.”

Me: “Who are teasing you?”

Children: “Our friends and teachers.”

These children’s responses reflected that disabled or different children perceived that they might not be valued, respected and welcomed in their local school. These children did not see school as welcoming, or as a place where they belonged. They may prefer to be out on the streets. Their comments also may have signalled that their teachers, students and parents did not believe disabled students were entitled to be educated in their local school with their peers.

These experiences led me to question how children’s rights to education are being met. Why were some children not attending school? This troubled me. Reflections on these personal experiences have motivated me to conduct research on this topic: Moving towards inclusive education policy and practice, and in particular how can we increase our understanding of barriers to inclusive education in Nepali higher secondary schools?

1.3 The focus of the thesis

A wide range of perspectives and definitions of inclusive education are found in education literature. This study defines that inclusive education endorses the rights for all children to access education in local schools in non-discriminatory, safe and healthy learning environments (Government of Nepal [GoN], 2007c, 2010, 2012a, 2012b). In other words, inclusive curriculum, pedagogy and assessment should aim to address every student’s interests and desires, as well as delivering the curriculum content in local classrooms (Bourke & Mentis, 2013; Guerin, 2015). Similarly, inclusive education is based on values of social justice and human rights (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Ballard, 2004a; Slee, 2011) that are embedded in schools and communities (McMaster, 2014). This definition implies that every

child, including disabled children, children from *Dalit* communities and from ethnic minorities groups are entitled to education.

There are many barriers to inclusive education within Nepal's schools and communities (Kafle, 2002; Thapa, 2012). UNICEF (2003) argued that implementation of inclusive education is not possible in the absence of accessible infrastructures, inadequate teaching materials, negative attitudes of teachers towards disability and untrained teachers. Additional barriers include a lack of resources and socio-cultural beliefs toward disability in Nepali communities. Teachers confront personal and social challenges in order to teach disabled students. For example, parental influence on schools and their approaches to including disabled students. This situation demands an in-depth study to determine the challenges, barriers and opportunities for schools' inclusive practices. This study aims to explore how inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted by government officers, school administrators, teachers, parents and students with and without disabilities in two public higher secondary schools in Nepal.

1.4 Setting the context

This section provides background information related to the Nepal context. Information includes the education status of children with disabilities, Nepal's disability policy context, the neoliberal policy in Nepali education, right to education for all students and the Nepali socio-cultural context: caste system and socio-cultural assumptions of disability in Nepal.

1.4.1 Educational status of children with disabilities

The concept of educating children with disabilities in Nepal began in 1964, after the establishment of a Laboratory School (Kafle, 2002; Lamichhane, 2012; Thapa, 2012). Several pieces of educational legislation, policies, and socio-political rules were enacted and amended to allow enrolment of disabled children in regular schools. According to the Flash Report (a census report of the students) of 2013-2014, the educational status of primary-level

children had dramatically increased and improved. The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) at primary level was 95.3% in 2013-2014. However, the same Flash Report stated that a low number of students with disabilities were enrolled in schools. The percentage of disabled students enrolled in primary, lower secondary and secondary levels were reported as 1.1%, 0.9% and 1.0% respectively out of 48,575 disabled children (DoE, 2014). This indicates that a significant portion of children with disabilities are not attending school.

Nepal has undertaken a variety of initiatives to implement quality education for all children. For example, the *School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP, 2009-2015)* prioritised the equitability of quality basic education for all children (aged 5 -12 years) in line with universal education for all children (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2009). However, UNESCO (2007) reported that Nepal would not meet *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* no. 2: Achieving universal primary education for all children (United Nations, 2000) by 2015. UNESCO argued that students' enrolment rate was increasing in grade one, but the retention rate of students across grades was inconsistent. In particular, the retention of disabled children in school indicated high levels of non-attendance (GoN, 2014). It appears that children with disabilities are still not attending school even though the government of Nepal has committed itself to providing free quality education for all children up to high school level. The next section describes the policies that influence education in Nepal.

1.4.2 Nepal's education policy context

The government of Nepal implements national goals of education through legislation, policy, regulation and curriculum. Before disseminating education policy, the government discusses these with selected people at different administrative levels: national, regional, district and village. Therefore, political leaders, teacher union representatives, political party representatives, bureaucrats, parents and teachers are involved in the policymaking process. Policy agendas are discussed at the different levels by different people and groups, who want

their vested interests reflected in policies. In other words, development and interpretation of education and curriculum policies constitute a process of making meaning, competition and compromise among differing priorities and worldviews.

While the government laws, policies, regulations and reports are supportive of inclusive education in Nepal, teachers and school administrators refer to 'special education' explanations and approaches within school contexts (MoE, 2002; GoN, 1990). For example, government policies state that education should be available for all students, including children from *Dalit* communities, marginalised children and disabled children (GoN, 1998). However, day-to-day Nepali school practices are influenced by deficit-thinking, a neoliberal approach to education, the traditional caste system and socio-cultural beliefs of teachers and school administrators (Poudel, 2007; Sharma Poudyal, 2016; Thapa, 2012). The next section explains the neoliberal reform policy approach to education in Nepal.

Neoliberal approach to education

The neoliberal approach is a politico-economic theory that focuses on strong private property rights, free markets and free trades (Harvey, 2005). This suggests that neoliberalism has three features: privatisation; marketisation; and decentralisation. The neoliberal governance opens education to the market and for-profit organisations (Ross & Gibson, 2007). In other words, the marketisation model of education reforms interpreted education as a commodity with "students and parents as 'consumers,' teachers as 'producers' and educational administrators as 'managers' and 'entrepreneurs'" (Harris, 2007 p. 50).

Since the 1990s many countries have followed a neoliberal approach to education (Meyer, 2001). For instance, Western countries linked with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) replaced traditional forms and practices of educational governance with neoliberal forms and methods of management. As a result, Western governments focused the education curriculum on preparing students for work,

industry, and civil service (Blackmore & Sachs, 2007). For example, New Zealand promoted the marketisation model in education in line with decentralisation of school management after the 1990s educational sector reforms (Codd, 2005).

Several Nepali education policies and practices resemble OECD countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, England and Wales (for example, Ministry of Education [MoE], 2009; National Planning Commission [NPC], 1985, 2002). Since the 1990s the government of Nepal has recommended privatisation, decentralisation and marketisation policies in education system. A significant aspect of the neoliberal policy initiative is to transfer the financial and administrative responsibilities' to local School Management Committees (SMC) (Bhatta, 2009; GoN, 1991). Marketisation, privatisation, competition, choice and decentralisation for human capital continue to be visible policy ideologies in Nepali educational policy planning (Poudel, 2007).

The neoliberal approach to governance believes in cost recovery strategies, such as tuition fee schemes, performance-based funding and merit-based scholarship in order to increase the equality and quality of education (Ballard, 2004a; Gordon & Morton, 2008; Harvey, 2005; Slee, 2011). In Nepal, this means there is a greater weighting on comparing schools' performances using the national standardised test results, such as the School Leaving Certification (SLC) examination. Historically, marginalised groups of children, such as disabled students may not even participate in these forms of testing. Thus, the notion of choice to enrol children in a good school based on test results limits opportunities for disabled students. Inclusion may be understood as under threat from neoliberal practices because education viewed is simply an individual right which ignores broader ways of understanding learning and achievement (Hardy & Woodcock, 2014).

The right to education for all students

All people including persons with disabilities are entitled to access the same education as their non-disabled peers in the local schools as a constitutional right in Nepal (GoN, 2015). According to the Constitution, the state should provide equal rights to education, social justice, equality health and so forth for all citizens in Nepal. Regarding access to education, the government adopted a rights-based approach.

The government of Nepal enacted the *National Framework of Child-Friendly School (NFCFS) for Quality Education* in 2010. The child-friendly school means a school that provides a safe learning environment for all children. The *NFCFS* further states the child-friendly school means:

- Children receive a safe and healthy environment, physically, mentally and emotionally.
- Children's aptitude, capacity and level are respected and provision is made within the environment and curriculum for their learning needs.
- Teachers bear full responsibility for assessing the students' learning achievements.
- Children are encouraged to enrol in school without any discrimination on grounds of their caste/ethnicity, sex, financial status, physical and mental frailty, and are treated without discrimination both within and outside school.
- Children, parents and communities take part actively in policy making, planning, implementation and evaluation of activities in the schools.
- All types of physical, corporal and mental punishment are prohibited, and constant efforts are made to protect children from abuse and harm (GoN, 2010, pp. 6-7)

The *NFCFS* emphasises a safe and healthy academic environment by focusing accessible curriculum and pedagogy for all children and respecting them in the school. Teachers should take full responsibility for assessing the students' learning achievement without discriminating them in the school. Students, teachers and parents should be involved in school policymaking, planning and implementation processes.

Nepal has signed and ratified a wide range of international human rights and education conventions and declarations that state the rights of students with disabilities (UNESCO, 1990, 1994; United Nations, 1989, 1993, 2000, 2006, 2015). The UN convention

on the rights of persons with disabilities (2006) Article 24 recognises that “the right of disabled persons to education...with a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity...shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning...” (p. 16). The current research project has been undertaken to find out how these (rights to education expressed in different national policies such as GoN, 2006b, 2006c; MoE, 2009) policies are translated into daily classroom teaching and learning practices in two public higher secondary schools in Nepal.

1.4.3 The socio-cultural context

The socio-cultural context has a significant influence on children’s learning. Learning is often a co-construction between teachers and students, parents and children through social interactions (Smith & Barr, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978). For example, if a particular society perceives some children as impure or having a deficit due to being from a lower caste (e.g., *Dalit*), it may hinder a child’s learning through limited opportunities. The socio-cultural context may also influence the researcher’s collection of in-depth information. The next section explores the Nepali caste system and socio-cultural assumptions about disability in Nepali communities.

The caste system

A caste refers to the traditional system of social stratification of Nepal a class structure of a group of people with a common blood-line, hereditary or occupational areas (Koirala, 1996). The four major occupational classes are *Brahmin*, *Chhetri*, *Vaishya* and *Sudra* which still exist in Nepal. The *Brahmin*, *Chhetri* and *Vaishya* are considered pure castes whereas *Sudra* is categorised as an impure/untouchable caste. The *Brahmin* occupations include *Guru*/teachers, scholars and priests. *Chhetri* caste members work for the king such as in the army. The *Vaishya* caste members work as traders, who look after the economy and supply of

food. The *Sudra* caste members typically provide services for the pure castes. Figure 1.1 illustrates the caste hierarchy in Nepal.

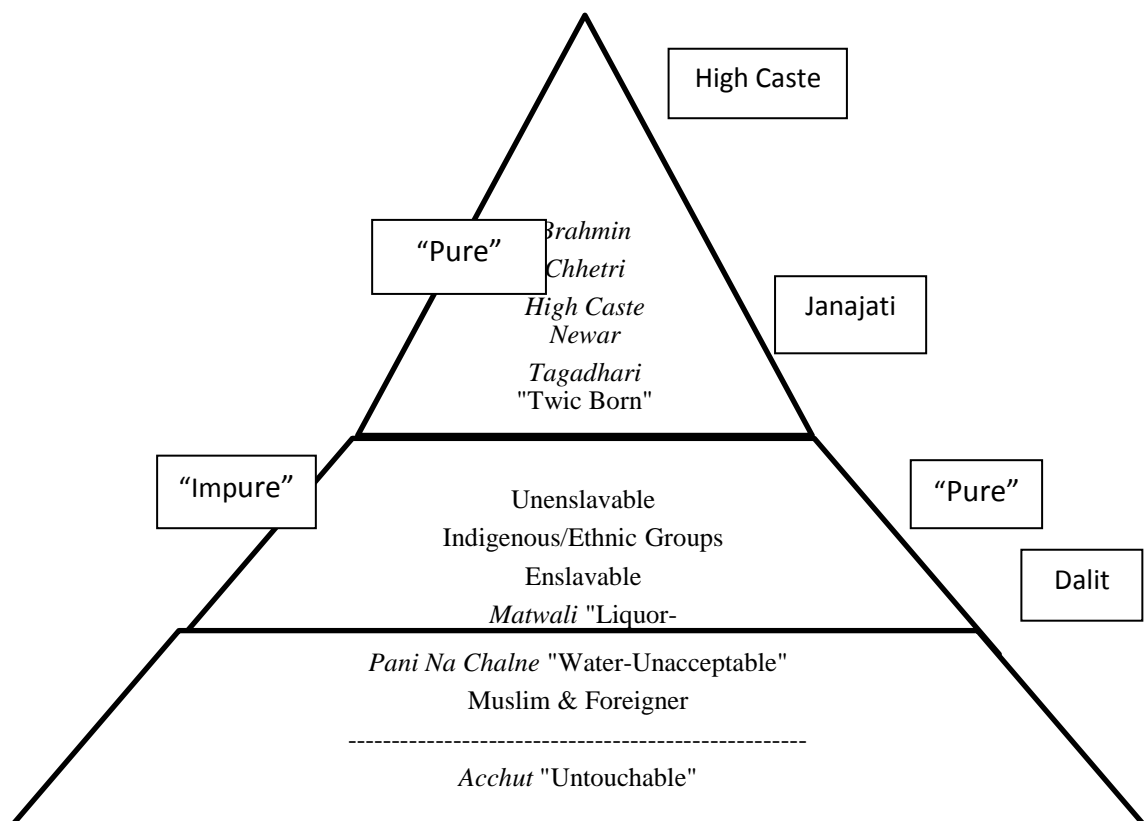


Figure 1.1: The Caste Hierarchy in Nepal (1854 Muluki Ain/Civil Code)

DFID and World Bank, (2009)

The caste hierarchy shown in Figure 1.1 illustrates that high caste and *Janajati* are known as the pure caste whereas Muslim, foreigners and *Dalit* are known as the impure caste (untouchable, *Pani Na chalne*/Water-untouchable caste). Khanal (2015) argues that caste-based discrimination still exists as an everyday reality in Nepali society. Similarly, the caste system is reported by DFID and the World Bank in 2006, 2009 as an institutionalized process of exclusion. If school principals, teachers, students and parents believe and follow the traditional caste hierarchy practices in daily school activities, it will affect the inclusionary

practices in school. This thesis argues that the traditional cultural norms and traditions increase exclusion rather than inclusion in school because teachers may discriminate between students based on their caste, religion and physical status. For example, a disabled student from the *Dalit* caste can be excluded in many aspects of daily life because of his/her disability and caste.

Disabled persons are restricted from participating in the social events in the Nepali communities regardless of their caste, gender, religion and age (Ghimire, 2012). Persons with disabilities claim that attitudes of people create a barrier preventing them from participating in socio-cultural events in Nepal (Thapa, 2012). Consequently, persons with disabilities have been reported to be stereotyped, passive and dependent, and have been oppressed by able-bodied people in the Nepali society (Kafle, 2002). My query in this thesis is how disabled students are perceived and accommodated by state policy and practices in regular school settings in Nepal. The next section describes the socio-cultural assumptions of disability in Nepal.

Socio-cultural assumptions about disability

People's beliefs, attitudes and actions towards those with disability contribute to socio-cultural assumptions. People's beliefs are guided by their religion. The majority of Nepali people identify with the Hindu religion and traditions (CBS, 2011). People follow and believe in Karma theory which is deeply rooted in Nepali societies. Karma supports a belief in the spiritual principle of cause and effect where good intentions and actions give good Karma and future happiness and prosperity whereas negative actions bring bad Karma and future pain. People in Nepal often associate someone's dis/ability with the Karma theory and people believe that 'disability' is due to a sinful action in the past (K.C., 2016). There are many examples of people are being negatively shaped by disability in Nepali societies. For instance, persons with disabilities were categorised as unable to work and earn in *Muluki Ain*

(Civil Code) in 1853. Thus, the government formed *Sadabarta Sidha* (a regular social welfare payment) to provide shelter, food and clothes (Thapa, 2012).

1.5 Disability Studies in Education (DSE)

This study draws on Disability Studies in Education (DSE) because DSE provides a framework to “create and sustain inclusive and accessible schools” by challenging the traditional deficit-focussed practices in education settings (Connor, Gabel, Gallagher, & Morton, 2008, p. 442). This means that DSE examines and explains the meaning of disability in social and cultural contexts (Morton, 2012; Smith, 2010; Taylor, 2006). Constructions of disability and special education practices are questioned by DSE and it theorizes disability and inclusive education from new perspectives (Connor et al., 2008; Taylor, 2006).

Scholars within DSE are motivated to develop understandings of day-to-day disabled person’s lives through their knowledge, interests, stories and views. DSE interprets disabled persons’ views and experiences of how non-disabled people recognise their disability or impairment (Connor et al., 2008; Danforth & Gabel, 2006; Ferguson & Ferguson, 2006; Guerin, 2015; Macartney, 2011). Listening to experiences of disabled persons and students with disabilities may provide important insights for teachers to resist or shift deficit expert knowledge of disability (Bogdan & Taylor, 1992; Ferri, 2006; Linton, 1998; Slee, 2001a). Participation of students with and without disabilities would help teachers to expand their understanding of the consequences of inclusive practices, particularly curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. DSE supports and focuses on the human rights-based discourse of disability by highlighting inequality, injustice and advocating for the full participation of persons with disabilities in education and wider communities (Connor et al., 2008; Danforth & Gabel, 2006; Rao & Kalyanpur, 2013).

1.6 The development of inclusive education

This section describes the meaning of exclusion, inclusion and the historical development of inclusive education globally and nationally (Nepal).

1.6.1 Exclusion and inclusion in the context of inclusive education

In order to understand inclusive education, defining the meaning of social exclusion and inclusion is helpful (Rawal, 2008; Rimmerman, 2013; Pradhan, 2006; Young, 2000). The term 'social exclusion' was first used in France during the 1970s to describe various categories of people who were excluded from employment (e.g., mentally and physically disabled, aged, abused children, single parents, marginal, and misfits etc.) (de Hann, 2000).

Exclusion, as a concept, is complex and confusing because it is used in different ways and has different meanings to describe a broad range of phenomena about people excluded from everyday activities or events in many disciplines such as social science, education, poverty and economics (Silver, 1994). For example, the European Foundation defines social exclusion as "a process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in society" (European Foundation as cited in de Hann, 2000, pp. 25-26). Now, some scholars in social science understand the concept of social exclusion as a process and a type of social problem in which individuals and a group of people are restricted from their rights, opportunities, participation and resources (Norwich, 2013; Pierson, 2002; Pradhan, 2006; Silverman, 2006). These ideas link to marginalisation and a socio-political process in which individuals are being pushed from the centre towards peripheries of society with the 'centre' keeping the power and voice (Hall, 1999). According to Hall's explanation, exclusion denotes a situation where an individual is restricted from their rights, opportunities, participations and resources due to multiple factors like resources and infrastructure.

The literature about inclusive education defines that exclusion refers to the forced removal of students from schools due to serious misconduct or breaching school rules

(Kearney, 2009). In Nepal, students are often restricted or excluded from school if they breach the school regulations, do not follow teachers' instructions, or bully other students inside and outside the school (GoN, 2002). Moreover, exclusion differs from school discipline. Exclusion comprises factors that create barriers for students from having full and fair access to the curriculum including extra-curricular activities. Special education can be viewed as a form of exclusion (Ballard, 2004b) because a student is restricted from accessing the curriculum, potential friendship groups, teacher's time in mainstream school environments (Booth, 1996). This study defines exclusion in line with the definition of Booth (1996), that "exclusion refers the process of decreasing the participation of pupils in the cultures and curricula of mainstream schools" (pp. 34-35).

Many children in developing countries including Nepal do not have access to schools and have poor academic achievement (UNICEF, 2003). This raises questions such as why many children including disabled children, ethnic minorities' and *Dalit* children are excluded from school even though the government of Nepal endorsed an inclusive education policy since the 1990s? So, how do these children get better access to education and learning opportunities? There is no single cause of why many children are left 'outside the school gate'. For instance, students are being excluded from school due to multiple reasons: poverty; gender; physical status; caste; religion; lack of a positive influence and government policies. As a consequence, exclusion in education creates barriers for some students in having full access to the curriculum, access to teachers, access to resources and access to friendships. Exclusion is not only associated with the physical presence of the student at school. Even a student who is physically present at school may be excluded from access to the curriculum and access to resources in the school.

1.6.2 Inclusive education

The educational literature defines inclusive education in ways that reflect a diverse range of

perspectives and understandings (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006; Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2010). Ainscow, et al., (2006) define inclusion through both a narrow and a broad definition. The narrow definition refers to the promotion of inclusion of specific groups of students, whereas the broad definition focuses on how schools respond to the diversity of all students and each member of the school community. This suggests that inclusive education is related to how public mainstream schools respond to all students, including diverse or different or disabled students needs through transforming the traditional learning environment into inclusive learning school culture by providing opportunities for all students (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Lipskey & Gartner, 1997; Westwood, 2013).

Inclusion is a continuous process of reform and restructuring, with a goal of all schools welcoming all students, including students with a disability and marginalised students (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan & Shaw, 2000; Booth, & Black-Hawkins, 2001; Booth & Ainscow, 2002, 2011; Florian, 2005; Mittler, 2000). Inclusive education refers to an approach that offers universal educational strategies to ensure the rights of every student within the regular classroom. It is perceived both as an approach and a process (Smith, 2010). As an approach, inclusive education facilitates a positive learning environment for all students by transforming the education system to reflect the diversity of learners (UNICEF, 2003). As a developmental process, inclusive education includes all learners through restructuring school policies, culture and practices based on inclusive child-friendly pedagogy. The process of inclusive education increases quality and justice by ending all forms of discrimination in education for all learners (Miles & Singal, 2010; UNESCO, 2011). Key components of inclusive education are: trained teachers; a flexible curriculum; child centred pedagogy; inclusive assessment systems; and a disability-friendly infrastructures (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Loreman, 2009; Sailor, Gerry & Wilson, 1990; UNESCO, 2001, 2003, 2005a, 2009, 2009a).

The definition of inclusion used within this thesis is consistent with the Department of Education (DoE) which states:

...inclusive education is the developmental process within the education system that provides the right for all children to experience a useful education in non-discriminatory environments in their own community and upholds multicultural differences of the country...(GoN, 2007c, p. 4).

This definition of inclusive education indicates inclusive education is a 'developmental process' which provides education for marginalised students in line with social inclusion policies. The DoE in Nepal identified marginalised groups of students as girls, ethnic children, children in poverty, disabled children, street children, child labourers, children affected by conflict, orphans and children affected by diseases (GoN, 2007c). It further stated that these children should receive education in non-discriminatory school environments. This policy implies that teaching and learning strategies, curriculum and assessment should include all students regardless of their labels and supports a social justice and human rights perspective of inclusion (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). The human rights perspective of education may challenge the dominant construction of language, pedagogy, curriculum and assessment practices in schools. The next section describes different perspectives of inclusive education.

1.6.3 Perspectives about inclusive education

Scholars explain inclusive education through different perspectives: rights, efficacy, political, pragmatic and development (Dyson, 1999; Sharma, 2015). The human rights perspective of inclusive education states that every child has a fundamental or human right to education in mainstream classrooms with teachers using appropriate pedagogies (Cologon, 2013). The efficacy perspective of inclusive education involves consideration of a cost-effective approach, whereas the political perspective of inclusive education describes education as a means to promote equity and social justice. The political perspective also considers protection of the rights of students. A pragmatic perspective involves child-centred and

inclusive pedagogies for all students in regular classrooms (Dyson, 1999). The developmental perspective of inclusive education is context-specific. For example, historically, the meaning of inclusive education in developed countries involved separate schools for girls, disadvantaged and ethnic groups, and disabled children. However, many of these children are now included in regular co-educational schools (Regmi, 2017; Sharma, 2015). Currently, in many developing countries, the term ‘inclusive education’ often refers to the reform of education of students with disabilities (Sharma, 2015). Currently and historically children with disabilities or special education needs in developing countries have been excluded from school or educated in separate schools. The developmental perspective of inclusive education views disability is a problem that lies within societies. As a result, schools are being encouraged to reform their curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and school structures to enable disabled children to access, participate and learn alongside their peers without disabilities. The developmental perspective of inclusive education is also supported by Sebba and Ainscow (1996) who state that schools have to respond and manage all students’ individual interests when organising teaching and learning activities.

Human rights, social justice and inclusive education

The *National Human Rights Commission Act* (GoN, 2012b) defines human rights as “life, liberty, equality and dignity of a person provided by the constitution and other prevailing laws and international conventions of human rights of which Nepal has ratified.” (p. 1, translated from the Nepali language). This definition of human rights suggests that every person has the right to life, liberty, equality, education and dignity as constitutional rights.

Inclusive education has strong links to human rights and social justice (Artiles & Dyson, 2005; Ballard, 1999; Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Morton, Duke, Todd, Higgins, Mercer & Kimber, 2012; United Nations, 1948). Inclusive education is seen as a concept that demands a rights-based approach to education for all students including disabled students.

For instance, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations, 1948) Article 26 reflects the core meaning of inclusive education. Article 26 states that all human beings have the right to have free education that encompasses the opportunity to fully develop the human personality and strengthens respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Similarly, the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1989) endorses that all children regardless of their physical status and race have rights to education. Article 23 refers to the education of disabled children stating:

Disabled children should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community (United Nations, 1989).

The *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education* (UNESCO, 1994) also focuses on the rights of all children to access education in the regular classroom setting. Schools should include infrastructure, curriculum and pedagogy to accommodate all students. Placing value on each student is one of the main principles of inclusive education so all students are welcomed and valued as 'learners'. Students are provided with equal opportunities to participate in all areas of learning (Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2010; Booth & Ainscow, 2002). The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, 2006) reaffirms all persons have rights regardless of their impairments.

The inclusive education literature states that inclusive education is also an issue of social justice (Ballard, 1999; Booth & Ainscow, 2002). The concept of social justice refers to an egalitarian society that is based on equality and solidarity principles (Zajda, Majhanovich & Rust, 2007). This means that all individuals deserve an equitable and fair access to collective resources. Social justice promotes the concept of inclusion by rejecting marginalisation, prejudice and exclusion. Social justice in inclusive education is also based on equal, fair, egalitarian and inclusive principles of education for all students.

Disability management and inclusive education

Historically, inclusive education emphasised managing disabled students' learning by providing special services to meet their individual needs (Regmi, 2017). A more recent shift has been in focussed on meeting the rights for all children in regular classrooms (Mitchell, 2005, 2014; Mittler, 2000). Inclusive education respects diversity and interprets individual students' differences or disabilities and views these as opportunities for enriching learning (UNESCO, 2005).

1.6.4 Origin and historical development of inclusive education

Two strands of the disability movement have influenced the development of inclusive education. The first one is the merger of the integration of disability studies to form a key part of the movement to refocus on building education systems for children with disabilities who have been restricted in their participation at the school (Slee, 2011). The second is focused on reforming the social model of disability and has led to the development of accessible regular school structures for disabled children (Slee, 2011; Stofile, 2008).

United Nations Declarations and Conventions related to children, education and disabilities have also played a significant role in the development of inclusive education. For example, the first international understanding and commitment to inclusive education was the *United Nation Convention on Right of the Child in 1989*. Article 2.1 states-

Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status (United Nations, 1989).

These statements imply that member states should ensure rights of every child regardless of their race, colour, sex, language, or physical status.

Removing educational disparities, equality of educational opportunity and universalisation of (basic) primary education for all, were the guiding principles of the *World Conference on Education for All (EFA)* (UNESCO, 1990). These principles serve as a guide

for national action planning of many countries including Nepal (Kafle, 2002). The overall aim of EFA is to educate all children. In the similar way, the *United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, 1993) specifies that the states should have responsibility for persons' with disabilities education in mainstream schools (Peters, 2004). Likewise, the *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education* in 1994 recommended principles and practices of inclusion and school for all children, including access to education through child-centred pedagogy in regular classroom settings. The Salamanca statement stated that inclusive schools are the most effective means of minimising discriminatory attitudes by creating welcoming environments for every child in the school. The *Dakar framework for Action* (UNESCO, 2000) and *Millennium Development Goals* (United Nations, 2000) specified that all children have access to free primary education by 2015 focusing on children who are marginalised, disabled, and from ethnic minorities communities (Peters, 2004).

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)* 2006 marked a paradigm shift in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. Article 24 specified that every nation should provide education for disabled persons without any discrimination, humiliation, bullying and based on equal opportunity in an inclusive education system. The *UNCRPD* recommended that the state should celebrate disability by providing education based on equal opportunity in the inclusive classroom settings. It also recommended that government should recruit teachers with disabilities and who are able to teach sign language and braille, and the state should provide in-service teacher training focussed on inclusive pedagogy.

The *Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action* towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all 2030 reaffirmed goals of *EFA-1990*, *MDGs-2000* and *Dakar declaration-2000* through the *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* 2016-

2022. The government of Nepal ratified and enacted the Incheon Declaration and SDGs. SDGs states,

Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2015)

The educational focus on SDG 4 suggests it must be based on principles of human rights, social justice, and inclusion. SDG4 can be interpreted mean that education is public good and focus on fundamental human rights by incorporating access, equity and inclusionary education approach for all children.

The development of inclusive education in Nepal, and other developing countries, has taken place in different ways compared to developed countries. The first special education program introduced in Nepal was an integrated program for visually impaired students at a Laboratory School in Kathmandu in 1964. The Laboratory School was established by Tribhuvan University with financial support from American Embassy as College of Education in 1956 (Sharma, 2011a). The development of special education was planned after the launching of the *National Education System Plan (NESP)* in 1971 (GoN, 1971). The outcome of the *NESP* plan was the constitution of the Special Education Council (SEC) in 1973. Similarly, the government of Nepal established the *Social Welfare National Coordination Council* (currently the *Social Welfare Council*) to look after the special education programmes in 1977 (CERID, 2004; New Era, 2001). A special education unit to provide education for special needs children was formed through the *Basic Primary Education Project (BPEP)* in 1991(Kafle, 2002; New Era, 2001). The *Special Education Policy* (1996) was formulated and implemented, creating the environment to raise public awareness for socialization of people with disabilities under the *BPEP I & II*. Development of a programme guide and orientation package, teacher training on special education, conducting resource classes, and development and printing of educational materials were the main objectives of the *BPEP I and II*. The Nepal context, similar to other developing

countries, has undoubtedly been influenced by international aid agency agendas alongside international education policies and standards.

1.7 Normal

The concept of ‘normal’ is derived from the discipline of statistics in the mid-1840s. Statisticians used the term ‘normal’ to measure human features such as height and weight (Davis, 2006; Gabel, 2017; Shyman, 2016; Valle & Connor, 2011). Education professionals, such as psychologists and teachers now use the concept ‘normal’ to assess and describe children’s cognitive ability. However, in the current study, the question ‘who is normal or abnormal?’ is considered as socially constructed. For example, the social constructionism perspective of ‘who is normal’ is illustrated by the *Dalit* people of Nepal. In the 1960s, *Dalit* people were not allowed to go to school as educating *Dalit* was viewed as unnecessary because they were viewed and treated as an ‘impure or untouchable’ caste by the broader Nepali community. But, *Dalit* people are allowed to go to school, now. Within 57 years, the concepts of education and views on *Dalit* people have significantly changed. As a result, *Dalit* children now attend school. So, the concept of ‘what is normal for *Dalit*’s education’ has changed over time (i.e., 1960-2017) and place (Nepal). This means that if concepts change over time and place, these changes reflect how concepts are socially constructed.

1.8 Identity

Identity can be defined individually and socially. Individual identity denotes what a person looks like, whereas social identity denotes how others perceive and categorise people (Morton, Rietveld, Guerin, McIlroy & Duke, 2012). If teacher educators recognise student’s identity through deficit lens, it will affect students’ competence to learn. Therefore, teachers are responsible for guiding students through their curricula, their personal practices and their narratives of experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, as cited in Morton et al., 2012). Inclusive education gives emphasis to build positive rapport between students’ and their families that

helps to identify their ways of learning. Building a good rapport with students and their families by respecting students' identity can support inclusive practice in the regular classroom. An inclusive practice develops a sense of belonging between teachers and students in the classroom (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

1.9 Belonging

Inclusive practice increases a sense of belonging for students as valued members in regular classrooms. Teachers' beliefs have an important role in development of a sense of belonging in the classroom (Morton, Rietveld, Guerin, McIlroy & Duke, 2012; Smith, 1996). This suggests that if teachers, peers and non-teaching staff devalued, isolated and excluded students including students with disabilities in the teaching and learning processes, these activities will increase exclusion rather than inclusion and participation in the learning. Respecting, valuing and welcoming increase belongingness for all children including children with disabilities because a sense of belongingness promotes and supports inclusive practices in the regular classroom. Teacher can develop a sense of belonging by exploring inclusive pedagogies, such as group work, cooperative, collaborative approach project work and so on (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Within Nepali education policy, all students including marginalised and disabled children are entitled to enroll in neighborhood school (GoN, 2008). Every school has to follow education policy and curriculum guidelines. The *National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF)* (GoN, 2005) has clearly mentioned that every school has to recognise learning capabilities of all learners by respecting students' values, desires and socio-cultural traditions. However, there are still barriers to access education in the local schools in Nepal.

1.10 Statement of the problem

The international declarations that have influenced Nepal's policies prioritise the importance of education and access to education for all people. However, access to education for persons with disabilities has historically been given a low priority in developing countries such as Nepal. UNESCO (2009) reported around 120 to 150 million disabled children under the age of 18 in the world. The same report estimated that more than 90% children with disabilities, who are living in the least developed or developing countries, do not attend school. Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported in 2011 that there was no clear data on the total number of children with disabilities and how many of them were out of school in Nepal (HRW, 2011). The population census statistics of the government reports that 1.94% of the total population of 26,494,504 were disabled (CBS, 2011). However, surveys from different organisations have revealed disability prevalence ranging from 10 to 13% of the total populations of Nepal (NORAD, 2009). There is a significant disparity between Nepal's census reports and the data reported about disabled people with apparent under-reporting of persons with disabilities in Nepal. A study conducted in 2004 by the Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID) found that children with disabilities in general and physically and mentally disabled children in particular are excluded from education in Nepal.

On the one hand, Nepal has made a significant progress towards achieving universal primary education in line with the *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*, *UNCRPD* and human rights approach to education. On the other hand, a significant number of the primary school aged children from marginalised communities, such as *Dalit* children, children with disabilities remain excluded from school (DoE, 2014; NORAD, 2009). This doctoral thesis specifically reports a study that investigated how inclusive education is perceived, experienced and enacted by government officers, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students with and without disability in two public higher secondary schools in Nepal.

1.11 Rationale

There is a need for research in the Nepal's disability and education context. Some studies have investigated inclusive education policy and disabilities studies related to socio-political-economic situations, special education, disabled girls and women, education, health and religion (CERID, 2004; Lamichhane, 2012; Thapa, 2012). However there is very limited research on the policy and practice of inclusive education and children with disabilities in particular in Nepal. Thus, this doctoral research project is focused on understanding the perspectives of people who work in the education system and related to the school communities about inclusive policy and practice.

The current research project findings may suggest some possible ways to improve schools' overall teaching and learning processes by providing support and ensuring full participation to learning for all students including disabled students in the regular classroom for teachers, parents and students. Similarly, the curriculum designers and text book writers can benefit from the findings of this study by supporting them on how to design and write curriculum and text books in more inclusionary ways by addressing all learners' needs. Findings of this project may help school principals and teachers to enhance their teaching and learning activities by exploring inclusive pedagogies (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Findings of this research project may have a long term impact on sensitising the issue of disability and inclusion for all marginalised children and children with disabilities in Nepal. In addition, this research project finding informs my own professional and personal career as a teacher educator. More specifically, the ideas on inclusive education generated in this research help me to understand how a better inclusive education can be created in the school.

1.12 Research questions

This research project especially concentrates on participants' beliefs, practices and knowledges towards inclusive education, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and disability.

The main research question guiding this study is:

How do government education officers, school administrators (principals), teachers, parents, and students with and without disabilities understand and experience inclusive education in Nepal?

The following supplementary research questions are also investigated:

- How do policy texts construct disability and inclusive education?
- How do teachers, school administrators, students and parents recognise and construct disability?
- What are the gaps between inclusive education policy and practices of inclusive education in Nepal?
- How do participant school administrators and teachers understand, perceive and experience inclusive practice?
- How do participant school teachers teach students with and without disabilities in the regular classroom?
- How do school administrators, teachers and students with disabilities resist the traditional way of teaching by offering inclusive practices?
- What are the factors that support the development of inclusion in the school?

1.13 Language

I present the current research findings in the English language. This is not my mother tongue.

I conducted this research in Nepal where people use the Nepali language as a means of communication in their daily activities. I found two significant issues of use of language in this study. The first issue is to find the appropriate word in English for some Nepali words such as "*Dharti ko Bojha*", "*Dhami*", "*Kalo Masan*" and so on. The second issue is to

translate interviews, classroom teaching observation and field notes into English because my research participants' feelings and ideas are influenced by Nepali socio-political-cultural context. It is very difficult to translate participants' socio-cultural context into English. Therefore, my presentation in the current project is also influenced by the Nepali socio-cultural context because human understanding is guided by socio-culture and use of language (Burr, 2015; Schechter & Bayley, 2002). Therefore, I have used some Nepali term (e.g. *Ratta*/rote learning) in this dissertation. The next section explains the meaning of some key terms in this study.

1.14 Meaning of some key terms in this study

I consulted a wide range of policies and texts to explore the meaning of disability, impairment, exclusion, inclusive education, special school, integrated school, mainstream/regular school, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. I often used a same term to define opposing discourses. I am conscious while using disability related terms in the current research project because there may be a connection between disability and negativity (Valle & Connor, 2011). Thus, I am going to explain my use of some key terms and their meanings in this thesis.

Disability and impairment

In this thesis, I define disability as social and cultural problem rather than an individual problem. The *National Policy and Plan of Action on Disability (NPPAD)* defines,

Disability is the condition in carrying out daily activities normally and in taking part in social life due to problem in parts of the body and the physical system as well as obstacles created by physical, social, cultural environment and communication (GoN, 2006c, p. 1).

In this definition, disability means a socio-cultural-political restriction for people with disabilities. I have used the following terms interchangeably throughout the thesis: disabled students, students with disabilities, disabled children, children with disabilities, disabled learners, learners with disabilities, diverse students, students with difference, persons with

disabilities, disabled person, and students with special needs. The term *impairment* means a lack some or all part of body due to defective organs of the body.

Diversity

Responsiveness to diversity means respecting that every individual has different unique characteristics and talent. Individual difference denotes variation in terms of caste, ethnicity, gender, socio-cultural beliefs, physical status, and age in this study.

Dalit

The *Dalit* is a caste of Nepal who was categorized as ‘untouchable’ in the *Purano Muluki Ain* (Old Civil Code of 1854) until the promulgation of *Naya Muluki Ain* (New Civil Code of 1964) (UNICEF, 2007). Literature in *Dalit* studies define that *Dalits* are those who are socio-politically-religiously-culturally-economically and educationally oppressed and exploited (Dahal, Gurung, Acharya, Hemchuri & Swarnakar, 2002). This study also defines *Dalit* as an oppressed and untouchable caste or group of people in Nepal.

***Gurukul* education system**

The *Gurukul* education system means a student went to the *Guru*’s/teacher’s house (residential) and the *Guru* instructed and trained the students. Generally, *Guru*’s house existed in a rural peaceful place away from the village (e.g. a forest). Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment were prepared by the *Guru* in this system. Teaching was purely based on *Vedic* education using religious and secret texts. Thus, there was no assessment system that the student received the right and correct education. High-class caste; *Brahmin* and royal families’ members’ sons were enrolled in the *Gurukul* school in 18th century. After having enrolment in the *Gurukul*, a student had to serve his *Guru* for years and convince him of his discipline, sincerity, desire, determination and level of intelligence, before his graduation.

1.15 Summary

This chapter introduced my interest in this research project and the research context. I have connected the present study with Disability Studies in Education (DSE) to investigate the inclusive education policy and practice in Nepal. I explained the educational status of children with disabilities by connecting Nepal's education policy, caste system and socio-cultural beliefs in Nepali society towards disability. The chapter explored the meanings of exclusion and inclusion, the historical development of inclusive education, the statement of the problem, and research questions.

1.16 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces my interest for this research. This is followed by the focus of the thesis, educational status of children with disabilities, Nepal's education policy context connecting by neoliberal approach to education, caste system, and socio-cultural assumptions of disability. I introduce the DSE, meaning of exclusion and inclusion, historical development of inclusive education, statement of the problem, rationale and significance of this project, some key terms used in this study and research questions.

Chapter 2 provides a review of related literature. This chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks related to this study. It elaborates on social constructionism (Burr, 2015), discourses of disabilities (Fulcher, 1989), a theoretical model of pedagogical discourse (Skidmore, 2002), alternative models of teaching and learning (Smith & Barr, 2008) and exploring inclusive pedagogy (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Barriers to inclusionary practices, teachers' understanding of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, teachers' role and school culture are explained in relation to the literature.

Chapter 3 explains the rationale for the methodological decisions undertaken in the study. The chapter discusses the rationale for selecting qualitative approach, the interpretative methodology, procedures for selecting the research sites and gaining access to the research

sites, discussion on methods of data collection, and analysis and discussion on ethical issues- which include trustworthiness and credibility, and limitations of this study. Chapter 4, 5 and 6 provide the results of the study.

Chapter 4 focuses on the discourses of disability which critiques how policies, practices, and participants' experiences recognise and understand disability through exclusionary ways. Discourses of disabilities (Fulcher, 1989) are used to critique the government official documents, teaching and learning practices of two schools, and participants' lived experiences. For example, disabled children are constructed as a burden, sick, incapable learners, feeble-minded, passive recipients, unproductive manpower, and products of sinful actions of family members or ancestors.

Chapter 5 draws on a pedagogical discourse of deviance (Skidmore, 2002) to critically analyse the recognition and responses to teaching and learning practices for all students including students with disabilities. Participants' experiences were broadly classified into the six themes which are based on Skidmore's model of pedagogical discourse of deviance. Policies, practices, participants' narratives and classroom observations were used to critically examine these dimensions within pedagogical framework. Research participants also constructed children with disabilities through deficit thinking.

Chapter 6 explores how teacher resisted and responded to traditional way of teaching and learning practices. An alternative model of teaching and learning (Smith & Barr, 2008) is used to critique policies, practices, research participants' narratives and lived experiences. Data are presented in seven broad themes. Some research participants constructed diversity or difference or disability as a strength and every learner including disabled learner can teachable in the regular classroom.

Chapter 7 discusses the main findings of Chapters 4, 5 and 6 in relation to the literature review in Chapters 1 and 2. The discussion is focused on exploring how government officers, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students with and without disabilities understand, perceive and experience inclusive education policies and practices in the regular classroom as well as exploring the barriers access to the education and participation of children with disabilities in mainstream school in Nepal. The chapter concludes with the summary of findings, recommendations and implications of this dissertation.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the context and rationale for conducting this study based on current literature. The chapter explores the meaning of social constructionism and the conceptual framework: discourses of disabilities; a theoretical model of pedagogical discourse; alternative models of teaching-learning; and exploring inclusive pedagogy. Barriers to inclusionary practices, Nepal's curriculum context, understanding of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, teacher's role, teachers' professional development and school culture are also described.

2.2 Social constructionism

The social constructionist perspective assumes that an individual can exercise agency in the co-creation, co-construction and interpretation of the world through his/her eyes (Burr, 2015; Crotty, 1998; Gergen, 1985). Meaning is co-constructed through interaction with society. Crotty defines social constructionism and argues that “knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of the interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (1998, p. 42). This study asserts that learning, teaching, curriculum, assessment and pedagogy are constructed within social contexts. Bjarnason (2008) stated that “people construct our own and each other's identities through our everyday encounters with each other in social interactions via language and other symbols” (p.252). Social processes play an important role in comprehending knowledge, meaning and the nature of realism (Burr, 2015; Gergen & Gergen, 2008; Guerin, 2015). Burr (2015) lists four assumptions of social constructionist approach, building on Gergen (1985):

- A critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge
- Historical and cultural specificity

- Knowledge is sustained by social processes
- Knowledge and social action go together

A critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge

Social constructionism insists that people must “take a critical stance toward our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world and ourselves” (Burr, 2015, p. 2). This means that people should challenge traditional notions of knowledge construction by critical thought and debate. Social constructionism warns people to be doubtful of their beliefs and what the world appears to be (Burr, 2015). Human beings have categorised people into different groups such as short and tall, abled and disabled, short-sighted and long-sighted etc. Burr (1995) and Crotty (1998) argue that such categories do not necessarily represent the true divisions. Human beings should not treat our knowledge of the world as the objective truth because the reality is only available to human beings through different divisions. As a consequence, people’s understandings of the world are not reflections of the reality. But people’s understandings of the world are products of their ways of categorising the world (Burr, 2015; Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002).

Historical and cultural specificity

“Social constructionism argues that the ways in which we commonly understand the world, the categories and concepts we use, are historically, culturally specific and contingent” (Burr, 2015, p. 4). Burr argues that such kind of thinking is a product of a particular social-cultural and economic arrangement and we must not think that our ways are correct ‘truth’. For example, people with disability are believed to be products of ‘sinful past actions’ in the Nepali society. Our perception and understanding of the world view towards anything and “our identity could have been different, and they can change over culture, context and time” (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002, p.16). Within this study, it can be seen that the meaning of inclusive education, pedagogy, curriculum, and disability have been changing since the 1960s

in Nepal. For instance, people understood disability as a medical problem in the 1960s, but, now, disability is commonly defined as a social restriction.

Knowledge is sustained by social processes

Our ways of knowing and understanding the world are developed and maintained through daily interaction between people (Burr, 2015). Therefore, social constructionists are interested in the analysis of all kinds of social interaction among people. They analyse the day-to-day use of language in social interaction. Social constructionists believe that knowledge is fabricated through social interactions and practices in which we construct common truths and compete about what is right and wrong (Burr, 2015; Gergen, 1985; Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002).

Knowledge and social action go together

Different social understandings of the world lead to different social actions. The social construction of knowledge and truth has social consequences (Burr, 1995). For example, in the past, some people interpreted disability as a product of ‘sinful action’ of the past and a personal problem in Nepali communities (K.C., 2016). Now, people view disability as a social problem. The concept of disability has changed and can be changed in the future in the Nepali communities. Likewise, Nepali society constructed the *Dalit* people as an untouchable caste in 1960, whereas society’s’ understandings and attitudes towards *Dalit* people are constantly changing now, and can be changed for the better for tomorrow.

Language is seen as a form of social action in social constructionism (Burr, 2015) that plays an important role to convey the meaning. Social constructionists focus on the multiple dimensions and realities of knowledge and they explore the ways people construct meaning. Thus, “socially constructed understandings are constantly being produced, and then challenged by new social interactions” (MacArthur, Higgins & Quinlivan, 2012, p. 240).

Social constructionism challenges taken-for-granted knowledge whether it is a spoken word or written text through the common sense of knowledge of ourselves (Burr, 2015). If teachers take a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge, it can assist teachers to make sense of inclusive practice. Social constructionism theories are relevant to make sense of inclusive practice in the classroom because these “view schools and classrooms as cultures in the making” (MacArthur et al., 2012, p. 241). If schools create new cultures, then meanings about all students including students with disabilities and their place in society, can be changed and contested (Guerin, 2015; Higgins, MacArthur, & Kelly, 2009; MacArthur & Higgins, 2007).

If teachers understand social construction of disability, this will help their understanding of ways that students can be respected through inclusionary teaching and learning practices in the classroom. Social construction of disability may also help teachers to recognise exclusionary teaching and learning practices for children with disabilities. These exclusionary constructions of teaching and learning practices can be reframed and changed through collaboration and cooperation between students and teachers with understandings about disability, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. A theoretical pedagogical discourse of inclusion (Skidmore, 2002) and alternative teaching and learning models support this inquiry by asking how constructions of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment can change. Discourses and social constructionism can draw attention to deficit thinking and teaching as a problem, and to suggest solutions.

2.3 Conceptual framework

The key ideas that are drawn on during the analyses include: Fulcher’s discourse analysis of disability, Skidmore’s work on pedagogical discourse, Smith and Barr’s work on alternative models of teaching-learning and Florian and Black-Hawkins’s work on exploring inclusive pedagogy.

2.3.1 Discourse of disability

In this section, I explore the meaning of discourse by connecting literature, and then Fulcher's discourses of disabilities are defined.

The term *discourse* refers to “a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events” (Burr, 2015, pp 75-76). In other words, discourses can represent a person or social status of the person in a certain light. Thus, discourses serve to construct the phenomena of our world for us, and different discourses construct these things in different ways, each discourse is portraying the object as having a very different nature from the next (Burr, 2015). Discourses are embedded in social, political and cultural practices (Gee, 2004; Linton, 1998; Rogers, 2004) and they can express through dialogue, language, behaviour, organisational hierarchy, and socio-political-cultural practices.

Discourses serve to construct the phenomena of people's worlds for them, and different discourses construct these things in different ways (Burr, 2015). Sometimes discourses can be invisible in people's work. This means people can struggle to make sense of inequalities in their relationships (Carrington & MacArthur, 2012). Discourses are also underpinned and are embedded in social, political and cultural practices (Gee, 2004; Rogers, 2004). This means that discourses are based on a layer of systems of ideas that emerge as systems of power (Neilson, 2005). For example, non-disabled people may have power to decide about disabled people's needs. The historical backgrounds of non-disabled people's groups have a very important part to play in who holds the power (Ballard, 1994). They can express their power over disabled people through dialogue, language, behaviour, organisational hierarchy and socio-cultural practices. People, such as policymakers, school inspectors and teachers have power and control to make judgements on their collective norms, beliefs and assumptions without further critical discussion (Middleton, 1993). As a

result, people were categorised into two groups: ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ on the basis of set of pre-determined criteria by so called able-bodied people (Macartney, 2011). If non-disabled people judge disabled persons, then, the majority of disabled persons will be classed as abnormal. People including school principals, teachers, parents, students and disabled students need to pay attention to everyday artefacts such as texts, conversations and written materials to understand how non-disabled people behave; interpret; think; believe and speak about children with disabilities, and their families. An understanding of discourses has helped me to find out about the use of language to interpret disability in the government of Nepal’s official legislation and policy, teachers’ practice and in children with disabilities’ experiences.

Grue (2015) argues that discourses are fluid because concepts of disability change over time. Therefore, it is important to notice changes in the phrases and words used when relating to persons with disabilities in society and school environments in particular. People may act within and across a variety of discourses on any given day. The meaning attached to a discourse can shift according to who has power (Neilson, 2005). If people are to critically think about the ways they are working they need to examine their dominant assumptions about the world – the knowledge that they may recognise as ‘common sense’. Similar to this, teachers also perceive deficit ways of thinking and being as natural and fixed (Crotty, 1998).

Fulcher (1989) argues that experiences of students with special needs should be examined from a social theoretical framework because she wanted to go beyond research participants’ beliefs, attitudes and perspectives (Fulcher, 1989). The discourse adds an opportunity to connect related ideas of participants’ understandings and perspectives. She argued that students with special needs’ voices are restricted by neoliberal thinking and approaches. In this research project, students with disabilities’ voices are oppressed by the government policy texts and participants perspectives. Fulcher’s discourse of disability helps

me to understand the complicated nature of people, both with disabilities and others who are working with them. Although people make every effort to support individuals with disability, as a society we continue to fall short of what we want. Paying close attention to the complexities of people and their contexts helps me to critique the policy and practice rather than blaming individuals. Full descriptions and consideration of these discourses are provided in Chapter 4. The next section introduces a theoretical model of pedagogical discourse (Skidmore, 2002).

2.3.2 A theoretical model of pedagogical discourse

Skidmore developed a theoretical model of pedagogical discourse in 2002. Skidmore published an article about it in which he argues that in the same school context and time, teachers can construct students' as good and bad learners (Skidmore, 2002). He conducted this study at two British schools by collecting data through semi-structured interview, observation and document analysis. Skidmore identified the discourse of deviance and the discourse of inclusion as influences on education policy and practice (2002). Skidmore uses five dimensions to support thinking about the influences and impacts of these two discourses. These dimensions are: educability; explanation of educational failure; schools' response to students; theory of teaching expertise and curriculum model. A pedagogical discourse provides a framework for making sense of how participant teachers recognise and respond to all children as 'learners', and in this research project I use it to analyse data in Chapter 5.

2.3.3 Alternative models of teaching-learning

Smith and Barr (2008) described the need to build a transformed democratic and inclusive society in Northern Ireland. They argued that democratic and inclusive values can be developed through schools and classrooms. They described teaching and learning on the basis of socio-cultural understandings of learning through interaction. They believed that teachers and students are co-constructing new knowledge by participating equally in teaching and

learning activities. They proposed six principles of alternative models of teaching-learning: Develop a sense of community; creative interdependence; empower citizens for democracy; develop a connective pedagogy; negotiate and develop cultural fluency; support learning and network with parents/carers and community (Smith & Barr, 2008). These principles support cultural diversity, equity and excellence for all. Smith and Barr's analysis indicated important issues for working towards more transformative inclusive practices by interpreting individual differences through human relationships rather than taking a deficit view. They believed that promoting educational inclusion was possible through inclusive school cultures where teachers and all students including disabled students can learn from each other by sharing their experiences. Smith and Barr's principles of the alternative model of teaching-learning help me to analyse data in Chapter 6 as my intention was to capture how my participants' perspectives might support inclusion by replacing traditional views of teaching, learning and curriculum into creating knowledge as part of doing things with others.

2.3.4 Exploring inclusive pedagogy

Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) examined teachers' craft knowledge of their practices of 'inclusion' in terms of what they do, why, and how they explore inclusive pedagogy. Their research findings offer the hope of inclusive pedagogy for all students by rejecting alternative pedagogies for some students (e.g., students with special needs). They conducted their research in two Scottish primary schools in order to find out "how teachers make meaning of the concept of inclusion in their practice" (p. 815). Their analyses were based on three theoretical assumptions. The first assumption is "shifting the focus from one that is concerned with only those individuals who have been identified as having 'additional needs' to the learning of all children in the community of the classroom" (p. 818). This area of inclusive pedagogy creates learning opportunities that are sufficiently made available for everyone so that all learners are able to participate in the teaching and learning processes in the classroom.

Teachers have to focus on what and how aspects of teaching rather than who is learning it. The second assumption is rejecting deterministic beliefs about a child's ability as being fixed and the associated idea that the presence of some individuals (e.g., students with disabilities) will hold back the progress of others. The third assumption is seeing difficulties in learning as professional challenges for teachers, rather than deficits in learners, and that these encourage the development of new ways of working. They recommended an inclusive pedagogy approach that catered for everyone rather than just some. These ideas are helpful for me to analyse participant teachers' pedagogy for all students including disabled students in Chapter 6. The next section describes barriers to inclusionary practices.

2.4 Barriers to inclusionary practices

Literature in education claims that inclusive practices are effective strategies to improve overall school education system (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). However, empirical studies find various challenges to implementing inclusive pedagogies in many countries including Nepal (CERID, 2006; Kafle, 2002). Challenges include a lack of resources, lack of infrastructure, financial limitations, teachers' negative attitudes towards different or disabled students, contradictory inclusion policy, large classrooms, and curricula constraints. In addition, the use of deficit language and lack of professional development for teachers create barriers to implementing inclusive practices in the classroom (Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2010; Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Kalyanpur, 2008, 2011; Lamichhane, 2013, 2015; Lohani, Singh & Lohani, 2010; Miles & Singal, 2010; Singal, 2008; Peters, 2004; Sharma, Loreman & Simi 2017; Slee, 2010, 2011, 2013; UNESCO, 2013). Several studies reported that teachers' attitudes are another obstacle to implement inclusive practice in the classroom (Bhatnagar & Das, 2014; Shaddock, Neil, Van Limbeek & Hoffman-Raap, 2007; Westwood, 2013). Similar to this, Subban and Sharma (2006) conducted a study on teachers' attitudes to include students who pose discipline

problems in classrooms in Victoria, Australia. They found that teachers' roles and attitudes play an important role in the implementation of inclusive practices in the local school. Likewise, Sharma, Moore, and Sonawane (2009) conducted a study to find out the attitudes and concerns of pre-service teachers regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities into regular schools in Pune, India. They found that participant teachers had negative attitudes and a moderate degree of concern relating to the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classes.

The Dynamic Institute of Research and Development (DIRD, 2014) conducted a study: *Analyzing educational status of children with disability and identifying critical intervention to promote the enrolment, retention and success in Nepali schools*. The DIRD found that the low level of the awareness of parents, poor infrastructure, poor and ineffective inclusive education, negative attitudes of teachers, lack of disability friendly teaching materials, curriculum constraints, lack of teacher training, a gap between policy and implementation, and teachers' lack of proper knowledge of inclusive education were barriers to including disabled students in the regular classroom. Similar findings are reported by the Center for Education Research Innovation and Development (CERID, 2004, 2006). As a consequence, the practice of inclusive education is affected. The next section discusses approaches to teaching and learning processes.

2.5 Teachers' understanding of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment

Teachers' beliefs and understandings of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment play an important role in determining who is included and who is excluded from attending school and also the roles and responsibilities of the teacher. Historically, people generally believed that children with disabilities were uneducable (Danforth, Taff, & Ferguson as cited in Morton, Rietveld, Guerin, McIlroy, & Duke 2012). Similarly, teachers' understandings and beliefs of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment determine how learning takes place in the classroom

(Fottland & Matre, 2005; Guerin, 2015; Smith & Barr, 2008). If teachers experience deficit thinking about disabled students' access to learning, their learning opportunities and experiences will likely be limited. In contrast, if teachers have positive attitudes towards every learner and provide access to learning for all students including disabled students, learning opportunities and experiences will flourish.

2.5.1 Curriculum

In Nepal, the *National Education System Planning* (GoN, 1971) defines curriculum as the educational program to meet the national objectives and goals of education for all students (Sharma, 2011a). This view of curriculum suggests it is a pre-planned written document that is prepared by the government of Nepal. In other words, the curriculum is an intended plan which reflects what students should learn and must acquire by the end of the academic year. The *National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF)* (GoN, 2005) endorsed a common inclusive curriculum for all students including marginalised groups of children.

However, there are different types of curriculum in practice. For example, Smith and Barr (2008) define three types of curriculum: fact, activity and inquiry. In curriculum as fact, teachers focus on the cognitive dimension; where students learn by being told and teacher's role is an expert who imparts new knowledge, concepts and skills which students learn by memorising new facts. An activity-focussed curriculum sees students engaged in active participation, exploration, reflection and research where teacher facilitates students' discovery of new knowledge, concepts, and skills. In curriculum as inquiry, teachers view themselves as learners and they engage as learners in *generative* learning activities where knowledge is co-constructed socially alongside students.

Teachers need to participate in the curriculum development and review processes as they are well positioned to incorporate the local needs and interest of learners. Null (2016) suggests that teachers need to understand the components of the curriculum and related

questions such as: Why do I teach? How do I teach? What do I teach? Who do I teach? When do I teach what for whom? And what activities are most effective to acquire the required knowledge? If teachers conceptualise these issues, it may help to challenge constraints of curriculum. Teachers also play an important role in implementing the curriculum's objectives by designing teaching plans: annual, term, monthly and daily. The *NCF* focuses on the importance of teachers' professional development to enact curriculum in order to make sure that teachers understand curriculum content and decide what is important for students to learn (GoN, 2005).

2.5.2 Pedagogy

Pedagogy refers to teachers' knowledge in content or subject-matter and teaching strategies. Having a good knowledge of pedagogy helps teachers to develop positive relationships between teachers and students. Therefore, teachers should have knowledge to recognise students' innate capacity, interests and experiences for learning (Carrington & MacArthur, 2012). Teachers' understandings, beliefs and perceptions of students' competency shape pedagogy in line with social constructions of curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment (Morton, Rietveld, Guerin, McIlroy, & Duke 2012). This indicates that teachers should design their instructional planning in line with Vygotskian socio-cultural approach by focusing on students' cognitive ability and providing students with more opportunities for learning. Teachers can also use a range of teaching strategies (e.g. collaborative teaching techniques) to actively engage all learners in the classroom.

In inclusive pedagogy, teachers have to use different student-centred teaching and learning strategies to support students' active participation (Carrington & MacArthur, 2012; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Smith & Barr, 2008). Smith and Barr (2008), and Corbett and Norwich (1999) suggest a connective pedagogy that promotes active, collaborative learning and learning responsibility and meta-learning. Within connective pedagogy, teachers

include all students in the curriculum by connecting their learning style with the wider community of classroom, school and local community (Corbett & Norwich, 1999; Corbett & Slee, 2000).

Sharma (2011b) argues that teachers should have knowledge of three Hs: Head; Heart; and Hand, to implement the inclusive practice in the classroom. According to Sharma, the teacher should have knowledge of inclusive education strategies with their 'head' (competency on inclusive pedagogy), belief that inclusive education is good for all with their 'heart' and ability to teach and include all learners with their 'hand' (e.g., performance on inclusive pedagogy: how to use in the classroom).

This research project defines inclusive pedagogy in line with the exploring inclusive pedagogy (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011) and a pedagogical discourse of inclusion (Skidmore, 2002). In the pedagogical discourse of inclusion, all students are identified "as having an open-ended potential for learning; where the source of difficulties in learning lies in insufficient responsive presentation of the curriculum; where support for learning should seek to reform curriculum and develop inclusive pedagogy across the school; where expertise in teaching centres in engendering the active participation of all students in the learning process; and where a common curriculum should be provided for all students" (Skidmore, 2002, p.120).

2.5.3 Assessment

The purpose of assessment may be understood as a measuring tool to measure whether or not students have learned desired learning goals (Morton, Rietveld, Guerin, McIlroy, & Duke 2012). This indicates that assessment categorises capable and in-capable students on the basis of their performance in the standardised test. Arguably, the *National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF)* informs that curriculum underpins assessment of all students' acquired goals of learning rather than judging students (GoN, 2005). The main objective of

assessment is used to “monitor the learning progress during instruction, make instructional improvement and effective learning of the students by means of identification and subsequent remediation of problematic aspects during learning” (GoN, 2005, p. 50). This indicates that the assessment guidelines are based on the principle of inclusive education. The *NCF* defines assessment as an ongoing interactional process between teaching and learning through Continuous Assessment System (CAS) that challenges traditional deficit-focussed assessment practice. The CAS also supports students’ innate learning ability.

The *NCF* states that teachers have to use both formative and summative assessment testing tools in day-to-day teaching and learning. Formative assessment is a continuous process which occurs when teachers take notice of what students say and do during day-to-day activities and processes in the classroom (e.g., students’ homework). In formative assessment, teacher and students are more focused on how learning is progressing and improvement in learning, as opposed to judging students’ performance (Morton, Rietveld, et al., 2012; Valle & Connor, 2011). In contrast, summative assessment is taken at the end of a specified period of time, such as academic year or term (e.g., an annual examination; a terminal examination) to determine students’ skills and knowledge what a student knows and does not know (Valle & Connor, 2011). Teachers use students’ performance in formative and summative assessment for future instructional planning.

In addition, the purpose of assessment is to “diagnose or specify deficits for disabled children” (Morton, Rietveld, et al., 2012, p. 276). This indicates that disabled students were dominantly viewed as incapable learners in comparison to non-disabled students by teachers. If a teacher over-emphasises disabled students’ inability to perform, there will be negative consequences of assessment on disabled students’ learning. Thus, teachers’ understandings of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment can support or impede inclusionary practices. The next section describes the teacher’s role.

2.6 Teachers' role

Inclusive education literature states that a teacher plays a significant role in implementing inclusive practices in the classroom (Bhatnagar & Das, 2014; Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Opertti & Belalcázar, 2008; Opertti & Brady, 2011). Effective inclusionary practice takes place when regular classroom teachers deliver relevant and meaningful instructions to all students including disabled students (Bhatnagar & Das, 2014). The regular classroom teachers have a key role in successful implementation of inclusive pedagogy, collaborative teaching strategies and creating learning opportunities for all students in the classroom (Jordan & Stanovich, 2004).

Florian (2008) states that teachers can support all students, including different or disabled students through inclusive teaching and learning strategies, such as cooperative learning technique and project work. Teachers have to select such strategies on the basis of what is to be learned rather than what is wrong with the learner. Knowledge of teaching strategies helps teachers to select teaching techniques that promote inclusion in the classroom. Within the inclusive classroom, teachers' roles are to teach all of their students, plan, develop new pedagogical strategies, identify resources to support their teaching and conduct action research (Florian, 2008). This indicates that teachers should have a facilitative role in the inclusive classroom. "The inclusive teacher plays a key role by addressing the diversity of learners' expectations and needs through a vast repertoire of innovative teaching and learning strategies that do not marginalize them within the broader education system" (Opertti & Brady, 2011, p. 470). This suggests that the inclusive teacher plays a crucial role to address diverse students' desire for learning by utilising different teaching strategies.

2.7 Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) training

Teachers' training in inclusive education has a significant role in implementing inclusive practices in the classroom. TPD training is a means to improve teachers' teaching skills,

increasing their confidence level and developing positive attitudes towards all students including disabled students in the classroom (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, 2012; Loreman, Sharma & Forlin, 2013; Sharma, Simi, & Forlin, 2015; Sharma, Loreman & Simi, 2017; Smith & Barr, 2008). Additionally, the TPD in inclusive education can have a positive effect on developing teachers' attitudes towards implementing inclusive pedagogies in the regular classroom (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000). Avramidis and Kalyva (2007) found that teachers who had long-term training in inclusive education were significantly more positive towards inclusionary practices in comparison to those who had not received training.

2.8 School culture

Within inclusive education literature, the term 'school culture' links to effective inclusive schools (Carrington, 1999; Dyson, Howes & Roberts, 2004; Riehl, 2000; Zollers, Ramanathan & Yu, 1999) and exclusion (Kearney, 2009). There is a partnership supporting inclusive practices among staff, students and parents in the school. Students and teachers work together to remove barriers to learning and participation through inclusionary practices. Inclusive school culture is based on multiculturalism, equity, social justice, collaboration, and culturally responsive teaching (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Corbett, 1999; Riehl, 2000; Thomas, Walker & Webb, 2005). Equity is maintained by changing the dominant curriculum, pedagogy and assessment systems. Success presents through students' achievement. Schools provide an equal opportunity for all students through critical and interactive teaching strategies. It is also about how teachers, parents and students use those teaching strategies.

Culture exists at different levels. Hall (as cited in McMaster, 2014) described three levels of culture. The first level of culture is seen, felt, and observed. For instance, people exchange their ideas with other people through a medium of language. While speaking with other people, they not only convey their message through a language, they also use their body

language, ritual and custom. The second level is expressed values of culture at a surface level. This level of culture reflects what people have openly expressed as their ideas in a group or in day-to-day conversations. For example, teachers talk and share their beliefs, values and ideas in the staff room during the tiffin break time. The third level of culture is hidden because it is not clearly seen, but deeply embedded within organisation's values, norms, beliefs and dominant assumptions. These values, beliefs and assumptions nourish a cultural identity to sustain and hold it. Every person translates these values, beliefs and assumptions in their way in the deepest level of culture and they use these values, beliefs and assumptions to interact with other people in their own way on the surface level.

Corbett (1999) explored a relationship between concepts of inclusive education and school culture in British schools. Corbett argued that successful inclusion may occur in the school if the deep structure of culture is examined. According to Corbett, changing an organisational culture may be a necessary step to welcome, support and nurture difference or special needs of students. Changing of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in line with inclusive education may not guarantee the reduction of exclusionary practices if the school does not follow inclusive culture in the school community.

Carrington (1999) stated that schools had to reflect their values and beliefs to create inclusive cultures. Within the community, people construct culture through their beliefs, attitudes and norms. Considering ability or disability or understanding difference can be influenced and constructed by socio-cultural judgements. She critically examined beliefs and practices of teaching and concluded a reflection on current beliefs and practices is a necessary step to move towards inclusive schools.

Zollers, Ramanathan and Yu (1999) explored the school culture of an urban elementary school and wanted to identify specific practices for a successful model of inclusion. Within the research field, they found that inclusionary practice was not only one

part that supported inclusive values and norms. Also, they found that principal's democratic leadership style, a broad vision of school community, shared language and values around inclusion and belonging were combined to create an inclusive school culture. Within inclusive school culture, everyone (principal, teacher, parents, and students) works collaboratively to ensure that all members of the school community experience a sense of being welcome, of belonging and of being valued in the school (Ainscow, 1999).

2.9 Summary

This chapter has reviewed literature related to inclusive education that forms a basis for the current study. It has discussed and explained: social constructionism; discourses of disabilities; theoretical models of pedagogical discourse; alternative models of teaching-learning and exploring inclusive pedagogies as an interpretive theoretical lens that shapes this project. The chapter has presented barriers to inclusionary practices, teachers' understanding of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, teachers' role, teachers' professional development and school culture. The research methodology utilised in this study is detailed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological aspects of the study. The chapter describes the research methods and procedures utilized, the design of the study, and selection procedures for research participants. Research tools for data collection, methods of data analysis, ethical considerations and limitations of the study are also discussed. This chapter concludes with outlines of the findings Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

3.2 Qualitative research and interpretive methodology

This study used a qualitative approach to answer the research questions. This approach focuses on understanding or gaining insight into how people interpret and make sense of their experiences in a particular context. Qualitative researchers are expected to be “concerned with the meaning people attach to things in their lives...understanding people from their own frames of reference and experience” (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016, p. 7).

What led me to conduct this research study was my interest in understanding different perspectives and interpretations of what inclusive education policy and practice implies in a specific socio-cultural and Nepali school context. Qualitative research design supported the study’s research questions by recording research participants’ experiences in their natural settings in order to obtain a rich and comprehensive description (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln 2011; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Robson, 2002; Rubin & Babbie, 2007; Simons, 2009; Straus & Corbin, 1998). The following research questions were developed to obtain participants’ perspectives and experiences about inclusive education policy and practice.

- How do government education officers, school administrators (principals), teachers, parents, and students with and without disabilities understand and experience inclusive education in Nepal?

- How do policy texts construct disability and inclusive education?
- How do teachers, school administrators, students and parents recognise and construct disability and inclusive education?
- What are the gaps between inclusive education policies and practices of inclusive education in Nepal?
- How do participant school administrators and teachers understand, perceive and experience inclusive practice?
- How do participant teachers teach students with and without disabilities in the regular classroom?
- How do school administrators, teachers and students with disabilities resist the traditional way of teaching by offering inclusive practices?
- What are the factors that support the development of inclusion in the school?

Qualitative researchers use data collection strategies that “parallel how people act in their daily life” (Taylor, et al., 2016, p. 9). Therefore, it is important to conduct qualitative studies in natural settings. Merriam (1988) suggests that a qualitative study is an ideal design for understanding and investigating how people make sense of educational phenomena. The analyses of qualitative data will support the generation of new knowledge and deeper understandings of research subjects’ perceptions and experiences towards inclusive education (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The qualitative approach is also appropriate to answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ forms of research questions which focus on current social issues (Yin, 2009). This study’s research questions were based on investigating “how” the research participants understand and experience inclusive education in Nepal. The “how” form of questions provides insight into the uniqueness of inclusive education policies and practices in higher secondary level classroom settings from a variety of perspectives. In this study, I listened to, talked with and watched participants because each participant’s perspective is regarded as equally important for researchers conducting qualitative studies. In qualitative studies, there is no “hierarchy of

credibility of meaning” (Taylor, et al., 2016, p. 10), with a key goal being to examine how things look from different points of view.

Data in this study is analysed inductively. Theory, concepts, insights and understandings can emerge from identifying patterns in the data as part of an ongoing inductive process (Taylor et al., 2016). A qualitative study has been used to investigate teachers’ professional knowledge, parents’, and the students’ perspectives of inclusive education and construction of disabilities in the different countries in the world (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Frederickson, Dunsmuir, Lang & Monsen, 2004; Rao, 2006; Rao & Petroff, 2011).

Interpretive methodology

This study utilised a social constructionist and interpretive framework which allowed an understanding of specific social phenomenon and examination how the world as experienced by individuals, focusing on socially constructed meanings and subjective worldviews (Neuman, 2006). Interpretivist researchers attempt to interpret another person’s reasoning, attitudes, and beliefs about an issue or practice.

An interpretive methodology helped to explore how inclusive education policies and practices were enacted in Nepali schools, and how research participants understood, perceived, and experienced curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, disability, and inclusive education. Furthermore, interpretive methodology provided opportunities to explore and gain insights into the social construction of disability and inclusive education in the schools and communities studied. The methodology also supported the investigation into how individuals resist and apply social rules in day to day practices in schools (Ferguson, Ferguson & Taylor, 1992). I was also interested in not only what inclusive education is, but also why and how it can support the realisation of human rights. Using an interpretive methodology allows a researcher to focus on an in-depth examination of key constructs. It challenges the researcher

to look for complexity and tensions within acts that may be seen as natural and simplistic. In this way the everyday stories of participants provide opportunities for the researcher to identify barriers to, and strategies that support inclusive practice.

3.3 Research design

My original plan was to conduct an ethnographic study in primary level classrooms (students aged 5-11 years old) of two public primary schools in Nepal. Purposive sampling was planned for sites and participants. One primary school was to be selected from an urban area in Kavreplanchok district and another school from a rural area in Solukhumbu district. I wanted to understand and interpret research participants' perspectives towards inclusive education policy, inclusive practice, disability, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in this study. Research participants were two school administrators, 14 participant teachers with and without disabilities, 14 participant parents/caregivers, 14 participant students with and without disabilities. Data was to be collected for seven months through participant observations, interviews and document analyses.

I began data collection in Nepal during April 2015. On April 25th 2015, Nepal suffered a severe earthquake and numerous severe aftershocks. The earthquake killed around 9,000 people. I was fortunate to survive this disaster. Many people were injured and many buildings including schools were destroyed. Many communities and villages were destroyed. The research site where this work was to be undertaken was one of the worst hit areas of Nepal. The Department of Education (DoE) in Nepal (2015) reported that the earthquake had destroyed and damaged more than 47,000 classrooms in 5,000 schools. An estimated one million school students were affected by the earthquake (Richardson, 2015; UNICEF, 2015). The earthquake had a significant impact on my study. Schools closed or were so damaged that they could not continue to function. Teachers and students were afraid of the aftershocks from the earthquake. I felt that it was no longer possible to conduct an ethnographic case

study for the proposed period of time in the primary level classroom. As a result, the study was re-designed and became a qualitative study focussed on public higher secondary level classrooms (students aged 12-16 years old) with a smaller number of research participants.

Why public secondary school?

I chose secondary school research participants for three reasons. These were (1) the national emergency due to the earthquake, (2) my own professional experiences in secondary schools, and, (3) the lack of research in this age group.

As I mentioned above, there was a severe earthquake on 25th April, 2015. I had commenced data collection in early April 2015 and I stopped for a month due to the earthquake. On recommencing data collection, I sensed that primary school participants were not comfortable sharing information with me. I suspected this may have been related to disruption and anxiety related to the earthquake.

My professional education roles have been in secondary schools as a teacher and teacher educator. Several acquaintances who were secondary teachers described teaching experiences with children with disabilities and further encouraged me to focus on this age group. While there is considerable research into inclusive education and educational experiences of children with disabilities focused on primary schools, there are limited studies that focus on secondary school experiences of children with disabilities. In addition, I selected public, as opposed to private, secondary schools as more than 80 percent of students attend public schools in Nepal (GoN, 2014). A further contrast was between rural and urban schools, with one school from each context participating in the study.

An additional change to the research design was inclusion of four officers from the Department of Education as research participants. The intention was to understand how the government of Nepal was going to accommodate inclusive education policy, particularly after

the earthquake. The timeframe for conducting research was shortened from seven months to a four-month period from April to July, 2015 (see Appendix 1). I collected qualitative data by using tools such as observation notes, interviews and policy documents.

I am grateful for the willingness of people to participate in this project when their own lives were disrupted by so many changes. These included personal and family circumstances as well as their professional responsibilities. I am mindful of the many unique stresses that were part of everyday life in Nepal at this time. This also included the stresses for my family and myself. Participants took part in this project in the hope that all people would benefit from the research being undertaken.

3.4 Identification and selection of schools and participants

Purposive sampling methods were used to select the research participants (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The sample was composed of government education officers, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students with and without disabilities in this study. Prior to the selection of research sites and possible research participants, I consulted a Flash Report for specific schools that I thought might be interested in this study. The Flash Report is published by the Department of Education (DoE, 2014). It contains information about schools, teachers, students, facilities and amenities within specific communities.

To begin the study, I made initial, informal contact with people who I already knew in the Department of Education and the District Education Office (DEO) through my previous work as a university lecturer. This contact was made using media such as email and Facebook. A number of education officers provided me with some useful information about the situation of disabled children and inclusive education in Nepal. This information related to schools that were identified as being inclusive in their practices. Based on this information and related literature, I decided to conduct my research in the Kavreplanchok and Solkhumbu districts.

I, then, communicated with District Education Officers in Kavreplanchok and Solukhumbu districts. The district education officers provided a list of schools within their district that may be interested in the research project. I approached 10 school principals in these districts. Eight school principals responded. In a phone call to each of these principals, I asked about the possibility of visiting each school to observe how the schools were implementing inclusive education practice.

After visiting Namuna Higher Secondary School (NHSS) at Kavreplanchok district and Kamana Higher Secondary School (KHSS) at Solukhumbu district, I found these schools were suitable for my study. My criteria for school selection was that these were public schools which welcome all students including marginalised, disabled, and Dalit students in regular classrooms. I observed that these schools also fulfilled my criteria of being willing to work in inclusive child-friendly schools. I defined an inclusive school as one where all children were welcomed and recognised as learners regardless of their socio-cultural status, biological status, gender, and religion. It appeared that these schools promoted a rights-based approach to education for all children. Therefore, it was determined that NHSS and KHSS could be the research sites for the study. I sent a letter to these schools asking them to share information about the study with staff, parents and students. The letter included information sheets (see Appendices 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7), and consent forms (see Appendices 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13) for the school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. The information sheets and consent forms were in English and Nepali language.

I selected a total of 48 research participants: four government education officers, two school administrators, 14 teachers with and without disabilities, 14 parents, and 14 students with and without disabilities. Prior to the project, I did not personally know any of the participants. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the total number of research participants, their place of work and their roles.

Table 3.1: Total number of research participants

Place of work	Roles of participants	Number of participants
Department of Education	Education officers	4
NHSS	School administrator/principal	1
	Teachers	7
	Parents	7
	Students	7
KHSS	School administrator/principal	1
	Teachers	7
	Parents	7
	Students	7

3.5 Methods

The full study timeline for data collection, transcribing, analysis and interpreting data, chapter drafting and writing up thesis is included as Appendix 1.

3.5.1 Research tools for data collection

Qualitative studies require spending sufficient time in the field to collect data. Over the four months of data collection I was in schools for least three days each week. I was able to observe a wide range of school activities and interact with research participants in the field to collect a rich dataset. The researcher's role is to "listen, look, document" everyday activities and conversations (Simons, 2009, p. 43). The data collection tools I chose to use in this study were observations, semi-structured interviews, focus-group interviews and document analyses (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Punch, 2009; Robson, 2002). See Table 3.2 for a summary of data collection tools. Additional data collection tools were mobile text messages, conversations, virtual media exchanges and my research journal. Observations and interviews were conducted in more formal settings (e.g., school offices), whereas informal conversations were conducted in a range of settings (e.g., pathways, corridors and school grounds). In my research journal, I kept a record of what I was thinking before and after observations and interviews. Virtual media sources of data were member-checked for themes and quotes by school administrators and government officers.

Table 3.2: Summary of data collection tools

Data Source	Research information sought	Participants	How many times?	How long?	Where?
Semi-structured interviews with government officers	Inclusive education policy, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, teacher training, resources	4	1	60-120 minutes per person	At their office
Semi-structured interview with teachers	Background of the participants. Perspectives towards inclusive education policy and practice. Perceptions of classroom management of able and disabled children. Experiences and opportunities, barriers for implementing inclusive practice.	14	3	40-60 minutes per person	At school after the observation of his/her class.
Semi -structured interview with school principals	School policy and practices about inclusive education Experiences and opportunities for, barriers to implementing inclusive education.	2	1	1-2 hours per person	At school or mutually agreed place
Focus- group interview with students with and without disabilities (selected from each school).	Student perspectives about school, teachers and learning.	14	1	40-45 minutes	At school
Semi-structured interview with two visually impaired students	Their experiences of school, teachers', non-teaching staff, and students' attitudes and perspectives towards them.	2	2	40-45 minutes per student	At school
Focus- group interview with parents (7 parents will be selected randomly from each school)	Parents' perspectives on schooling.	14	1	60-90 minutes	At school
Non-participant observations (inside the classroom).	To identify some ways teachers implement inclusive education practices inside the classroom.		14 +14 (NHSS + KHSS)	40-45 minutes per classroom observation	Inside the classroom.
Non-participant observation in the school	To observe the overall school environment outside the classroom	2	2	60-90 minutes per observation	Outside the classroom, in the staff room and playground.
Document analysis	Policy goals and statements. Intent of policy.		Throughout the research process.		Across organisations.
Social media	Contact with research participants. Member checking.		Throughout the research process.		
Conversations	Formal and informal discussions in every day practice.		Throughout the data collection phase of research.		In schools
Researcher journal - Field notes	Informal observations and comments from my work throughout the project.		Throughout the research process.		Across research settings.

Observations

An observation is a process of careful watching of some phenomena, characteristics, and interactions which occur in real life situations. Kumar (2005) defines an observation as a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to interactions as it takes place. The observation can enable recording of detailed and specific information about educational activities and practices (Scott & Morrison, 2006). For qualitative studies, direct and indirect observations are important as they provide sources of evidence that can be used for cross checking with other data. This study used both formal observations, such as in classrooms and informal observations in areas, such as school canteens and playgrounds.

My role was as a ‘non-participant’ or ‘passive’ observer (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016) in the classrooms. I was not involved in the teaching activities while I watched the classes working with their teacher. I sat at the back of classes, took notes and observed. The notes I took during my classroom observations were in my researcher journal. I did not interact with the teacher nor did I talk with students during teaching and learning processes in the classroom because I did not want to disturb the teacher or students. I carried out a total of 28 classroom observations and each observation was for about 40-45 minutes (see Appendix 14 for classroom observation form). Following each classroom observation, I wrote details of observed activities in the classroom and made notes in my journal. Specifically, I focused on observing formal teaching and learning activities, such as teacher-student interactions, teaching strategies, seating arrangements, student engagement with classroom activities, student-student relationships, use of teaching aids, use of teaching plans, time management and evaluation activities.

Outside the classroom, I was able to observe students and teachers working in a more relaxed way. I observed: the body language and facial expression of participants; conversations the students had with teachers and one another; communication between

teachers and parents; informal staff discussions over food and break time; and informal parent-teacher conversations. I wrote about what I observed in the field in my research journal. Data collected from observations helped to check for consistency between what the research participants said (their beliefs) and what they did (their actions) (Rao, 2006).

Field notes

Making and maintaining a researcher's journal is a supportive tool in qualitative research (Burgess, 1984; Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016; Yin, 2009) because it allows a researcher to keep track of what has already been covered in the interviewing and observations. Field notes can provide a source to refer back to specific dialogues to check what has and has not been covered. Field notes can also provide an opportunity to further interpret data and reflect on potential influence of researcher "inadequacies, prejudices, likes and dislikes" (Bogdan & Biklen 2007, p. 122).

Preparation for observations involved sketching each classroom, and noting the date, time, class, number of students, the physical setting of the classroom. I allocated a code for every classroom observation. I recorded classroom activities on an audio-recording device to refer back to when reviewing observation notes. I also used a range of abbreviations in my research diary such as T for 'Teacher'; TLP means 'Teaching and Learning Process'. Writing the note in short form saved time and helped guide me to determine possible 'codes and categories' when I was coding the data in the data analysis phase. After each observation, I sat in the staffroom and wrote my thoughts and reflections about the observation. Then on returning to my residence, I listened to each recording and looked at my field notes and wrote my final field notes. I re-read the final field notes at least three times before finalising (see Appendix 15). The field notes also helped me to reflect on my understanding of the preliminary codes and categories allocated during on-going data analysis process. For example, after reading and writing of three field notes of classroom observation, I identified

recurring words ‘teachers’ understanding’ and ‘teaching’ that could benefit from a specific code.

Interviews

Conducting an interview can help researchers gather more in-depth information from research participants (Bishop, 1997; Creswell, 2013; Kumar, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984; Thomson, 2009). Researchers may use more than one type of interview depending on the information they are investigating and the participants they are working with. This study used semi-structured interviews with government officers, school administrators, teachers with and without disabilities and students with disabilities. Focus-group interviews were used with a group of parents and also with a group of students including disabled students and non-disabled students.

Semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview is flexible and open-ended rather than relying on a narrow band of questions. This type of interview allowed me a level of flexibility, and the opportunity to listen actively and establish rapport with my interviewee (Silverman, 2006; Subban & Sharma, 2005). I used open-ended questions to collect data because they are helpful for making sense of participants’ understandings of issues (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 1988; Simons, 2009).

Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault (2016) suggest five factors for conducting any type of interview. They suggest researchers pay attention to clear and well-defined research interests, and that interviewers should be aware of accessible settings, people and time constraints. During interviews, in this study, I followed Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault’s (2016) steps to conduct semi-structured interviews. I was clear about the research topic, familiar with my research interest and context. During interviews I used open-ended questions that focused on understanding a central phenomenon (i.e., inclusive education policy, disability policy and

practice). All interviews took place at the most convenient time and place for participants. Interviews lasted 60 to 120 minutes with the government officers; 40 to 60 minutes with teachers at school, 60 to 120 minutes with school administrators; and 40 to 45 minutes with visually impaired students at school. I audiotaped interviews and took notes in my research journal. The interviews were transcribed and member-checked for authenticity. Appendix 16 details interview guidelines and the prompts used during semi-structured interviews.

Robson (2002) argues that interviews can be time- consuming and participants can be anxious or shy to speak in the interview. I found one challenge while interviewing participants. Some adult participants reported feeling anxious that I might report their perspectives to their school principal or government officers. I assured them that I would not discuss their responses with their school principals nor would I report their comments to the government officers. Furthermore, I stated that the purpose of interview was to observe teaching and learning practices rather than judging and reporting on their performance to others.

Focus-group interview

The focus-group interview is used to obtain lived experiences of research participants with a focus on a specific topic (Creswell, 2013; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Punch, 2009; Robson, 2002). The focus-group interview emphasises dynamic group interactions to gain perspectives of research participants. Ideally, participants feel relaxed, and have opportunities to discuss and consider a topic from different perspectives (Kaehne & O'Connell, 2010). The social context provides an opportunity for researchers to spark new ideas that may not be discussed in individual interviews. In this research project, two focus-group interviews were conducted: one with parents and another with students, both disabled and nondisabled. Maykut and Morehouse, (1994) suggested the following steps to conducting a focus-group interview:

- a. Decide on a focus of inquiry
- b. Develop interview guidelines
- c. Develop a sampling plan
- d. Select number research participants, time and venue
- e. Prior to conducting the interview:
 - memorise your interview guide
 - get together all materials and equipment
 - Re inform participants about interview, time and venue before one day of interview
- f. Conduct the group interview

(Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 109-110)

I adhered to these steps for the focus-group interviews in this study. Prior to conducting the focus-group interview, I selected research participants and prepared interview guidelines. The guidelines contained interview questions and topics for the group discussion (see Appendix 16). I considered the objective of the research before selecting participants and interview topics. In both focus-group interviews with parents and with students, I selected seven research participants for each group. I reminded research participants about the interview time and venue one day prior to conducting the focus-group interview. Participants were welcomed and interviews commenced with a starter question being posed to the group. I used verbal prompts and encouraged research participants to discuss, elaborate their ideas and responses.

Focus-group interview with participant parents

There were 14 participant parents including parents of disabled children in the focus-group interview. There were five male, eight female participant parents and one female caregiver. The focus-group interview was held in the school day and it lasted 60 to 90 minutes. The focus-group interview explored how participants constructed the meaning of disability, inclusive education, school and teachers' perspectives on schooling for their children.

Literature on qualitative studies state that research participants may not feel comfortable to share their views due to domination one or two participants in the focus-group (Creswell, 2013; Robson, 2002). Managing the group and maintaining confidentiality

between research participants are challenges noted previously (Robson, 2002). I experienced aspects of this during the parent focus-group. For example, participants argued with each other over some opinions and experiences. This challenged me to organise and facilitate the interview so that I could collect the required data. At one point I stopped the interview, clarified the focus of our work together, and asked participants to respect each-others' views and to give other people the opportunity to finish what they wanted to say. I worked as a facilitator and encouraged all participants to discuss their views in the group.

Focus-group interview with participant students with and without disability

There were 14 students including two students with visual impairment in the student focus-group interview. The students were aged from 12 to 16 years old, with seven female and seven male students. I included students without disabilities in the focus-group interviews with disabled students because I wanted to understand non-disabled students' perceptions towards disabled students. The focus-group interview was held during the school day and it lasted 40 to 45 minutes. I facilitated and moderated a group discussion by putting a starter question to the group. Students shared their views and commented on each other's perspectives. The students were asked questions about students' perceptions on school teacher, non-disabled students and learning. Simple Nepali language was used to explain if participant students needed further clarification about the discussion topic.

I was mindful that the majority of student participants had never experienced a focus-group interview (Collins, 2006). To build trust with students I spent time with each before the interview. For instance, I greeted and respected all students and was friendly towards them. I also spent time with them in the school playgrounds. Prior to interviewing the student participants, I told them the purpose of the interview. I also advised them that they could leave from the interview at any time if they felt uncomfortable. I found that students were worried that I might tell their teachers and parents what they said. I stated that I would not

discuss their responses with their teachers or parents. The focus-group interviews were transcribed and member-checked with the participants for authenticity.

In addition to interviews and observations, data were gathered from official documents and artefacts such as policy related to education, policy related to persons with disabilities, School Improvement Plan (SIP), yearly plan of school, daily lesson plan, students' progress report, and school policies. The next section explores the document analysis.

Documents

Documents can provide a rich source of data for social science research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Punch, 2009; Robson, 2002). Documents including official policy documents about inclusive education, annual reports, audit reports, organisations rules, regulations, international non-governmental organisations' reports and school improvement plans were collected in this project. My intention was to review policy documents to elicit a picture of how all students including students with disabilities might be legally or formally identified as 'learner' in the policy documents at national, local and school levels. I analysed both formal and informal documents. Table 3.3 provides a summary of the sources and types of documents I consulted and used in this research project.

Table 3.3: Summary of consulted documents

Consulted documents
<p>The <i>Inclusive Education Policy for Children with Disabilities</i> (2017)</p> <p>The <i>Identity Card Directory for Disabled Persons</i> (2017, 1st amendment)</p> <p>The <i>Constitution of Nepal</i> (2015)</p> <p>The <i>Flash Report from Department of Education</i> (2014)</p> <p>The <i>School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP, 2009-2015)</i></p> <p>The <i>National Framework of Child-friendly School for Quality Education</i> (2010)</p> <p>The <i>Interim Constitution of Nepal</i> (2007)</p> <p>The <i>National Curriculum Framework for School Education in Nepal</i> (2005, 2007)</p> <p>The National Policy and Plan of Action on Disability (2006)</p> <p>The <i>Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP I-II, 1990-2004)</i></p> <p>The <i>Special Education Operation Regulations</i> (2003)</p> <p>The <i>Education Rules</i> (2002)</p> <p>The <i>Education Act</i> (1971, 8th Amendment)</p> <p>The <i>Special Education Policy (SEP, 1996)</i></p> <p>The <i>Disabled Person Protection and Welfare Rules (DPWR, 1994)</i></p> <p>The <i>National Education Commission (NEC, 1991) Report</i></p> <p>The <i>Disabled Welfare and Protection Act (DWPA, 1982)</i></p> <p>The <i>Scholarship Act</i> (1964)</p> <p>Disabled related studies</p> <p>Publications of MOES, NGOs, UNESCO, DFID, World Bank,</p> <p>Disability related news from different media</p> <p>The government of Nepal national development plans and programs</p> <p>School related document such as school improvement plan, school diary, school annual plan, daily lesson plan</p>

Conversations

Conversations were a further source of data within this project. I had both formal and informal conversations with my research participants throughout the study. I talked with research participants in many different places including assembly grounds, staffroom, canteens, staff meetings, and libraries. These conversations helped me interpret teachers' and students' attitudes towards, and perspectives on education and disability. These conversations also helped me build good relationships and mutual trust with the participants. For example, I had a tea and tiffin with teachers and students together in the tiffin break in the school. I wrote field notes in my journal following these informal and formal conversations.

Virtual media

I collected data from a variety of virtual media during this study. I communicated with research participants, such as government officers, school administrators, and teachers through virtual media (e.g., Facebook, Viber, Email, and Skype). These sources of data were member-checked for themes and quotes with the participants. I printed all communication with participants through virtual media and kept these documents securely with other field data in my office at the University of Canterbury.

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis is a “process of systematically searching and arranging data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns of the collected raw data and other related data from documents” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 159) in order to come up with findings. In this study, data was analysed in a number of ways.

Data analysis was an ongoing process. I began data analysis and interpretation informally as I continued to collect data in the field. I read and re-read my field notes as a whole at the end of each week. When I read my field notes, I used different colours to circle repeated words and wrote codes in the margins. For example, I used ‘T’ for ‘Teacher’ and TLP for ‘Teaching and Learning Process’ in the margin of the field notes and explained by elaborating it how I found these in the classroom teaching and learning process. I had supervision meetings every fortnightly via Skype. My supervisors provided feedback and support around any confusion I had regarding the data analysis process during the supervision meetings. This continuous analysis process is an essential element in directing the process of the data collection because the researcher may find inductive codes and categories from various data sources and research participant’s words and actions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984; Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016). In

this way, it is possible for an emerging understanding of themes to help researchers think about the information they are gathering and need to gather.

An additional challenge for this study was that data was collected mostly in the Nepali language and this thesis was written in English. My field notes were written in Nepali. Interviews were conducted with a mixture of some in English language and some Nepali. I transcribed data into Nepali language and then translated these texts into English. I paid attention to typical Nepali words, idioms and phrases which do not have an exact translation into English language. I was mindful of the need to ensure ideas and information was interpreted as accurately as possible. At times I used a Nepali-English dictionary to support my understandings and interpretations. I analysed data inductively using the analytical model for qualitative data analysis (Taylor et al., 2016). This model has three overlapping phases: discovery, coding and discounting.

3.6.1 Discovery phase

The discovery phase means the researcher is working to find meaning in the data and identify emerging themes. Taylor et al., (2016) state that researchers need to learn to look for themes by investigating data in many ways. For example, I read and re-read data many times before translating from Nepali to English. I also examined possible codes in many ways. Transcriptions and the translation processes were time-consuming. However, the transcription processes provided opportunity for familiarisation with the data. This helped discovery of some possible codes. I was mindful that of preserving the original meaning of text during the translation process. My interpretations could influence the data while translating from one language to another language (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I consulted Nepali–English dictionaries and English–Nepali dictionaries to maintain accuracy in the translation.

After translating my data, I discussed preliminary themes and ideas with my supervisors. I clarified these and searched the literature to see if these themes were apparent in other people's work. I kept track of important ideas from my supervisors and the research literature and compared these with the data. I went through this process with all data and created a single computer file. I frequently re-checked repeated words or phrases in the data for emerging themes or patterns. According to Taylor et al. (2016), "Researchers move beyond description to interpretation and theory..." (p. 173). I found this to be true as I identified themes from the data.

I paid a lot of attention to the language used by participants. I noted participants' vocabulary, recurring words, meanings, folk sayings, local slang, and proverbs in the non-participant observations and interviews (Nepal Academy, 2006). Sometimes I changed the theme or identified new theme as I was reading data. For example, when I asked a student with disabilities about the school environment I said, "How do your friends behave towards you inside and outside the classroom?" He replied that his friends teased him by saying "*Dharti ko Bojah*" or "burden to the earth". My initial codes for this data were "exclusion" and "bullying". I compared these concepts with key literature in inclusive education, disability studies in education, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Florian & Balck-Hawkins, 2011; Fulcher, 1989; Kalyanpur, 2011; Kalyanpur, Harry & Skrtic, 2000; Lamichhane, 2015; McMenamin, 2015; Morton, 2015; Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler & Yang, 2013; Rao & Kalyanpur, 2013; Slee, 2011). After re-reading data and the literature, I altered this to a new concept or theme called "burden". I presented these concepts and typologies in a chart, highlighting patterns in the data. I also wrote an analytical memo about what I had found in the data by connecting themes to the literature.

3.6.2 Coding phase

Coding is the second phase of data analysis and interpretation. Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault, (2016) explain that “the coding process involves bringing together and analysing all the data bearing on major themes, ideas, concepts, interpretations, and propositions” (p. 181) in qualitative research. I developed some initial coding categories by looking at the data and making a table of codes on my computer. I grouped data from the observations, interviews, documents and field notes. Data with similar themes were placed into one column and different data into another column. I highlighted these columns with different colours. There were many codes and my first table had numerous columns.

I allocated a number for each code that emerged in the data. At the end of this data analysis stage, 71 initial codes were identified. Further analysis resulted in merging of some codes together to reduce the list to 43 codes. I, then, placed 43 codes with notes and comments on both an A3 sheet of paper and in a computer file. I repeated this process multiple times, merging and re-naming new codes during this data reduction process. An example of this is the original themes of ‘welcoming, respecting and valuing’ which were merged into a new code ‘belonging’. I went back and checked my data against all of the 20 themes. I recognised some data as not being relevant to my research question so I placed these data in a separate computer file. See appendix 17 for the original 20 themes codes. After further consideration of the 20 themes, I identified the following three broad themes:

- Exclusionary policy: Understanding disability through discourse
- Exclusionary practices: Teachers’ beliefs and experiences of teaching and learning
- Inclusionary practices: Inclusive student-friendly school culture

Data analysis is an iterative process that gave me an opportunity to revisit, interact with and check codes again and again until I finalised my writing. Part of this work was being

aware of my own beliefs and attitudes about inclusion and education and any ways these views changed while I was researching.

3.6.3 Discounting phase

Discounting data is about trustworthiness, reliability and credibility of the research findings.

The discounting of data means thinking about how the data was collected, who was present when data was collected, who said and did what, and how the researcher's perspective can impact on data collection (Miles as cited in Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016). The discounting data phase is one strategy to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of data.

3.7 Trustworthiness and credibility of the research

Trustworthiness is an important characteristic of qualitative research relating to rigour of methods, credibility, and believability of the data analysis, interpretation and findings of the research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Harrison, MacGibbon & Morton, 2001; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Punch, 2009). To ensure trustworthiness, and credibility, data should be triangulated from different perspectives or sources, such as observations, interviews and document analyses (Creswell, 2013; Lather, 2003; Mason, 1996; Robson, 2002). Developing a good rapport with research participants increases the believability of the results of research (Robson, 2002). This may mean if research participants trust the researcher, they will provide true information. I developed a good relationship with my research participants by “asking good questions, and listening to them intently” (Merriam, 1988, p. 23).

My position as a researcher

As explained in Chapter 1, my experiences, beliefs and values were a significant part of this research project. I have worked in various roles in the education sector, including a primary school teacher, secondary level English teacher, teacher trainer and university lecturer. I have strived to develop and maintain the rights of all people in education by developing positive

relationships with different people. For example, I make a point of not arguing if someone expresses different values than mine. I listen to and respect their values. I was mindful about my position as a researcher in this study and ensuring I do not alter or misrepresent participants' views, values and beliefs. My role is both, insider and outsider in this research. My insider role denotes that I am Nepali and familiar with local school, language and socio-cultural traditions for disabled persons. My outsider role involves me conducting this study in disabilities studies in education, but I am non-disabled and an educated researcher from the *Brahmin* caste.

3.7.1 Credibility

Within this study, credibility relates to the rigor of the research process, procedures for data collection and analysis, and generating the outcomes of the research. To support the credibility of this project, I presented a detailed description of the research processes and outcomes to my research participants that “provides readers with a basis for judging the credibility” of this study (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 145). Literature also states that triangulation is an important factor to maintain credibility (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Robson, 2002). According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), triangulation means “many sources of data were better in a study than a single source because multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomena” (p. 115-116). In this project, data were triangulated among observations, interviews and document analysis.

Credibility can be ensured by reflexivity in the qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Researchers reflect on the research process, presuppositions, the research context, and acknowledge subjective judgements to increase the credibility of research findings. I provided the research processes and research context to readers throughout the research process that helps to increase the credibility of findings.

The researcher's position can affect the trustworthiness and credibility of the research findings (Fox, Green & Martin, 2007). This means researchers must define their position in the research. I explained my position as a researcher and university lecturer from *Brahmin* caste to my participants and to the reader. Also, I am mindful to maintain confidentiality, and anonymity of my research participants' views, data transcribing, interpreting and writing the findings. Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of research can add credibility in this research project.

Member checking

Member checking involves research participants having the opportunity to review data provided and confirming it was an accurate representation of their thoughts and words. Member checking helps to maintain the trustworthiness and credibility of research findings in the qualitative studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016). I provided participants with transcribed data and asked them to give feedback about whether their views and contributions were represented. I also re-visited the research field in December 2016 in order to find out if participants had further reflections on the preliminary findings of this study. The final findings incorporate and reflect the participants' comments and feedbacks.

In addition, I also sent some sample transcripts, translations, codes and themes to an expert Nepali native speaker, who was familiar with both qualitative research and the research context. This further helped me to cross-check whether the coding accurately captured participants' views. In some instances, the expert asked for further clarification about data when he did not see the link between the code and data. He advised me to change or merge two codes into one code. For example, 'stigmatisation' and 'superstition' codes merged into 'stigmatisation'. After receiving feedback on analysed and interpreted data from

the expert, I revisited the research questions and data to categorise which themes might fit in appropriate findings chapter.

3.7.2 Representation and reflexivity

An important aspect of this study was to represent experiences and perspectives provided by different participants, including those of disabled students (Guerin, 2015; Kincheloe, 2012).

An important representation issue was to consider my role as a non-disabled person in re-constructing the participants' narratives, perspectives and views. I found some disabled participants had concerns about my representation because I represented their voices (Birtzman, 2003; Oliver, 1987, 1990, 1996). This reminded me of my responsibility to represent participants' views and information as accurately as possible and with respect.

I was conscious about my responsibility to readers and audiences who read this thesis related publications and presentations or listens to the presentation of this thesis in academic journals, conferences or workshops (Morton, 2006). Researchers in qualitative studies argue that speaking on behalf of another is problematic (Alcoff, as cited in Morton, 2006) because researchers may misinterpret the actual voices of participants. This may mean that I might misinterpret research participants' perspectives, views and experiences that they wanted to convey because I was responsible for the drafting and shaping of texts in this thesis. However, I addressed misinterpretations of participants' views and my bias by asking them for their feedback on my interpretations of themes, discussions and findings. If I did not understand participants' perspectives and statements, I would ask them further questions in order to make their views clear.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity means a "self-understanding, recognising biases, values and experiences that the researcher brings to a qualitative study" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 229). This implies that researchers should declare his position and identify possible biases and steps taken to

minimise these biases throughout the research process. I maintain reflexivity in a number of ways in this research project. For example, in Chapter 1, I have described my motivation to conduct this research, explained my childhood memories and professional experiences working as a university lecturer. I also identified how I think people have constructed persons with disabilities in Nepali communities and schools.

My biases and socio-political-cultural traditions may have influenced my interpretation and analysis unconsciously. To minimise my biases in this work, I engage in continuous self-critique to explain whether my previous knowledge have or have not affected the data interpretation, analysis and findings (Koch & Harrington, 1998). I revisited and cross-checked several of my preliminary findings with my research journal notes, my comments in participant observations, analytical comments on interview transcriptions, analytical memorandums, my supervisors' feedback on data analysis, and related literature until I finalised in this thesis (Bogdan & Taylor, 1998). I also consulted with my paper presentations in different conferences and workshops (Morton, Guerin & Thapaliya, 2016; Thapaliya, 2016a; Thapaliya, Aisyah, Heng, Saemon & Wong, 2015; Thapaliya, Morton & McMenamin 2016a, 2016b; Thapaliya, 2016; Thapaliya, Morton, McMenamin & Guerin, 2017). By consulting interview data, analytical memos, supervisors' comments on data analysis, discussion with participants, member checking and related literature, I was able to ensure that findings of this study were accurate, trustworthy and valid.

As a researcher, it is my responsibility to inform readers about my roles, and reflexivity in this dissertation. The readers may then make their own sense of understanding how I developed the research paradigm, methodology, data collection methods and ways of interpreting and analysing the data while they are reading this thesis (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Guerin, 2015; Macartney, 2011). As a result, the readers can comment on trustworthiness, credibility and believability of this thesis.

3.8 Ethical issues in research

Qualitative researchers face many ethical issues during data collection phase in the research site, and in the analysis and dissemination of research findings (Creswell, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thus, they should protect the rights of human participants and should report findings ethically (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Punch, 2009; Soltis, 1996). In this research project, I adhered to the ethical principles of the Education Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC) Code of Ethics of the University of Canterbury. Ethical principles include informed and voluntary consent, respect for rights of privacy and confidentiality, limitation of deception, minimisation of risk, and obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi (University of Canterbury, 2014). The University of Canterbury's ethical principles were strictly followed except the ethical principle of the obligation under the Treaty of Waitangi in this study. I did not follow the obligation under the Treaty of Waitangi principle because this study was conducted in Nepal. The research started only after receiving approval from the ERHEC, University of Canterbury in 2014 (see Appendix 18).

Ethical principles of informed and voluntary consent imply that research participants understand and aware of the nature of the research, understand their right to decline to participate in the research and withdraw from it at any time (University of Canterbury, 2014). I provided a clear explanation of this study for research participants and obtained consent from each participant. Before distributing information sheets and consent forms, I verbally explained the objectives of this research (see Appendices 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7). After that, informed consent forms (Davidson & Tolich, 2003; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) were obtained from the participants (see Appendices, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12). Regarding students' with and without disabilities, the consent form was obtained from their parents or caregivers (see Appendix 13). All participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

The ethical principle of respect for right of privacy and confidentiality refers to participants' privacy of their identification, confidentiality of the information, and safe keeping of consent forms, and storage of data. The participants were assured of their privacy and confidentiality throughout the research process and after the research findings conclusion. I also informed research participants that I discussed and shared data with my supervisors. I assured participants anonymity in publications of the findings. Neither their name nor their school name would be published in thesis or report resulting from this study; pseudonyms would be used to maintain the anonymity of participants. Formal and informal taped interviews, observations, documents (school), and researcher journals were kept securely during and after the study in my office at the University of Canterbury. All this data will be destroyed five years after the submission of this thesis.

The ethical principle of minimisation of risk refers to “minimise any risks attendant on participation; such risks include pain, stress, emotional distress, embarrassment, and moral or cultural offence” (University of Canterbury, 2014, p. 8). I was mindful that research participants might recall painful experiences, emotional distress and cultural offence. There was also a potential risk of power and authority of my position influencing participants in this study. I stated my position and that this did not create any problems for them because I used to be a lecturer in Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC). Conducting this study in Kavreplanchok and Solukhumbu districts, away from KMC was a further step taken to minimise the risk of participants feeling under pressure to participate. I told participants that their willingness or unwillingness to participate in this study would not have a negative influence on other collaborations with me and/or my institution and their school.

Storage of data

To maintain privacy and confidentiality of the information provided by research participants, I kept transcriptions of data, observations, interviews, policy documents and other related

documents in locked cabinets in my office in the College of Education, Health and Human Development at the University of Canterbury. All electronic data and related documents were, and will be, securely stored in password-protected facilities and locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years of this study. After that time all written information related to this will be destroyed. I also stored data on my computer and I copied all data on an external hard disk and protected by a password in case of damage to the original data.

3.9 Limitations of the study

The study was subject to several limitations, including the scope of the participant sample. These limitations make it difficult to generalise the findings to other schools or jurisdictions in Nepal. The study was conducted in two public higher secondary schools located in the Kavreplanchok and Solukhumbu districts of Nepal. Study participants included four government officers, two school principals, 14 teachers, 14 students with and without disabilities, and 14 parents of students with and without disabilities. The diversity of focus group participants may also have influenced study findings. Focus groups included parents of children with and without disabilities. This contributed to several lively discussions and at times, disagreements, during the sessions. For example, some parents of children without disabilities expressed negative attitudes towards having students with disabilities at the same school as their children. This may have resulted in parents of disabled student changing or limiting their contribution to the discussion. Similarly, disabled students may not have been comfortable sharing information in the presence of others in the focus group discussion. Therefore, the focus groups were followed-up with semi-structured interviews with two students with disabilities, partly to cross-check information presented in the focus group. Future research that contrasts data gathered from focus groups of separate and mixed, disabled and non-disabled participants is likely to enhance this research.

3.10 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the qualitative approach and the interpretive methodology that guided this research study. I justified the qualitative tools used for data collection, and data analyses and interpretation processes. I identified and discussed the selection of research sites, participants and ethical issues. Finally, I identified and discussed limitations of this study. The next three chapters discuss findings of this research project. Chapter 4 discusses critical elements of exclusionary policy, practice and experiences with participants. Chapter 5 focuses on teachers' beliefs and experiences of recognizing and addressing the needs of all children in the school including disabled students. Chapter 6 discusses how teachers resisted inequality and injustice for children with disabilities in the school. This chapter explores how some teachers use child-friendly classroom strategies for all students in order to achieve a goal of inclusive school culture.

Chapter 4: Understanding disability through discourse

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes disability in Nepal by investigating disability discourses portrayed in Nepali educational policies and reported by the research participants. The chapter addresses the research questions-

- How do policy texts and the research participants construct disability and inclusive education?
- What are the gaps between inclusive education policies and practices of inclusive education in Nepal?

Understanding different disability discourses provides an opportunity for policymakers, teachers and other educational stakeholders to consider broader perspectives when identifying and considering the needs of children with disabilities. For example, a social constructionist approach offers policy makers and teachers the opportunity to understand the sources of disability concepts and practices by critiquing individual, group and socio-cultural beliefs and practices. The data analysis process involved a careful review of Nepal's policy texts together with participants' expressed values, beliefs and perceptions about disability. Data are critically analysed using Fulcher's model of the five key discourses of disabilities. However, Fulcher's lay and charity discourses are merged with the religious discourse in this study. A key theme that emerges from the data reported in this chapter, is that Nepali policy texts and the participants' experiences when constructing their perceptions and beliefs about disability and its effects on students' learning, are heavily influenced by a discourse of deficit/disability or the dominant medical discourse. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key themes identified.

4.2 Fulcher's discourse of disabilities

Fulcher (1989) set out to investigate how policy makers struggle to translate democratic policies into educational practices or experiences for all students, including disabled students, in the Australian context. In an examination of inclusive education policies, she identified five discourses of disability: medical, charity, lay, corporate-managerial and human rights. Das (2010), Ghai (2009) and Rimmerman (2013) discuss the religious discourse of disability that is evident within the present research project. The religious discourse of disability is similar to Fulcher's lay and charity discourses. The religious discourse is based on a moral or religious approach to recognising disability. In this study, I merged lay and charity discourses into the religious discourse of disability.

Although Fulcher used discourses of disability in the Australian context, in 1989, these discourses are still significant in recent works by several researchers in Australia and New Zealand. For example, Selvaraj (2016) reported that New Zealand's educational policy has been under the influence of the medical discourse of disability. Similarly, Macartney and Morton (2013) analysed the New Zealand Early Childhood and School curriculum documents using the medical discourse of disability. They identified a strong medical discourse of disability and reported the disabling effects of this discourse on children's learning and participation. I use both Fulcher's initial analysis of the discourses of disabilities as well as more recent authors who have also drawn on Fulcher's work, such as Selvaraj, in 2016. Figure 4.1 represents the four discourses that are used to analyse data in this chapter. Although, Figure 4.1 presents these four discourses as separate from each other, at any given point in time multiple discourses are evident in the practices and policies in this study.

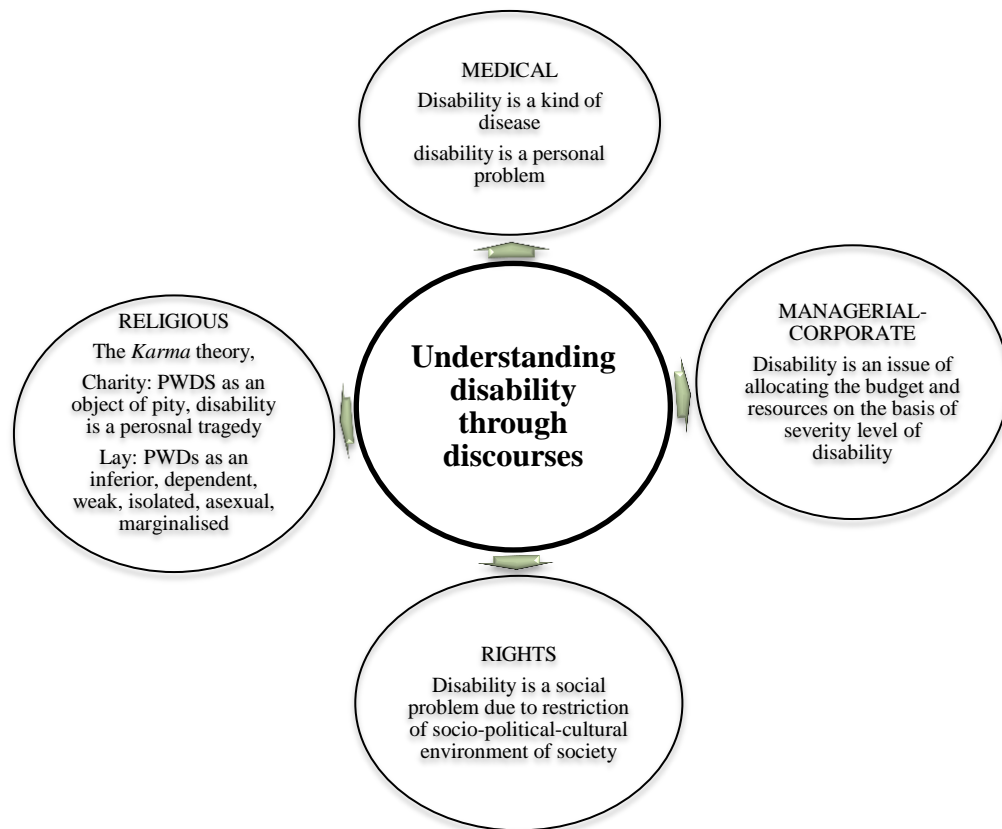


Figure 4.1: Understanding disability through discourses

4.2.1 Understanding disability as a medical issue in Nepal

The medical discourse of disability proposes that disability is the result of a physical deficit and defined as a personal health problem (Neilson, 2005). The assumption is that if a person with a disability has an impairment, they are sick and need to be cured (Ballard, 1994; Neilson, 2005). The medical discourse's main focus lies in "physical changes and their effect" (Fulcher, 1989, p. 26). This discourse associates terms such as *impairment*, *handicapped* and *helpless* with disabilities and these words are often used interchangeably with disability. From this perspective, disability is treated as an observable and objective characteristic of a person. The medical discourse identifies children with disabilities as being persons with individual deficits that require rehabilitation in order for them to become 'normal'. This may suggest that education is seen as a form of treatment that needs to be delivered by experts.

The medical discourse of disability can be seen in the language used to define differences or disability in Nepali policy documents. This involves the comparison of an individual with others or against a prescribed list of so-called ‘skills’ or ‘abilities’. A team of professional experts are involved in measuring the level of dis/ability by different disability diagnosis committees. For example, a paediatrician might determine a child meets the criteria for a certain health condition or a speech-language therapist might describe a child as having a speech-related disability or difference. Disability is seen as an individual problem that can be identified by forming different disability identification committees to diagnose people’s disabilities. This suggests that disability is a health problem. This approach emphasizes the need for specialists to categorize individuals. These features in a medical discourse of disability are evident in the Nepali policy texts and policy processes. The following section describes four elements that were identified in Nepali policies that illustrate a medical discourse of disability. The four elements are: 1) diagnosis and identification of disability; 2) the concept of ‘normal’; 3) professional experts deciding important things about disabled students; and 4) disability as an individual deficit.

Diagnosis and identification of disability

In Nepal, the diagnostic process of identifying individuals with disabilities involves a committee-based process. For instance, the *Disability Identity Card Distribution Directory* 1st amendment in 2016 (Government of Nepal [GoN], 2008) describes the three levels of disability identification committees in Nepal: Village, District and National. These committees decide about who is disabled and who is not. The Village Level Disability Identification Committee (VLDIC) recommends a person for a disability identification card to the District Level Disability Identification Committee (DLDIC). In the DLDIC, there are the following representatives,

Assistant Local District Officer (Co-ordinator)
Planning Officer of District Development Committee (Member)
Medical Officer of District or representative from District Hospital (Member)
Representative of National Disabled Association (Member)

(GoN, 2008)

The DLDIC identifies and recommends people for the disability identity card to the National Level Disability Identification Committee (NLDIC). Recommendations are made on the basis of documents and pre-determined criteria of disability. The supporting documents are typically a letter from the disabled person to the Disability Identification Committee, a medical doctor's letter, a letter from local government representative (Village Development committee, VDC), a birth certificate, Nepali citizenship, parents' citizenship and three copies of a passport sized photograph. If all documents are deemed to be in order, the NLDIC recommends the issuing a disability identify card. The government of Nepal categorises disabled people on the basis of their physical problems (see Table 4.1 below). People are given different coloured cards depending on their disability. These cards categorise people according to the severity of their disability into A, B, C and D (Red, Blue, Yellow and White). This indicates that through the formation of the disability committee, 'disability' is seen as a particular issue, similar to a health or sickness-related issue, e.g. fever (Fulcher, 1989). Disability is taken as technical and more likely a health problem in the policy. As a consequence, the government of Nepal forms disability identification committees. Table 4.1 presents the seven disability types and four severity ratings of disability based on people's physical status.

Table 4.1: Category of disability

S.N.	Category of disability based on physical problem	Category of disability based on disability severity and disability identity card			
	Type of disability	A (Red) Profound disability	B (Blue) Severe disability	C (Yellow) Moderate disability	D (White) Mild disability
1.	Physical disability				
2.	Vision related disability : Blind and low vision				
3.	Hearing related disability: Deaf and Hard of hearing				
4.	Deaf-blind disability				
5.	Voice and speech- related disability				
6.	Mental related disability: Intellectual disability, Mental illness and autism				
7.	Multiple disabilities				

(GoN, 2006c)

These categorisations of disabled people are indicative of a medical discourse because professional experts have judged whether a disabled person is eligible for a disability identity card on the basis of assessment criteria and medical reports. The power that some professionals have in labelling others by their impairment also illustrates medical model of disability. The criteria are set by experts and professional input is required to determine and recognise who has what severity level of disability. For example, the *Disability Identification Card Distribution Directory* defines, physical disability as follows (translated from Nepali to English):

Physical disability: Partial or total loss of physical operational abilities; problems with the use and movement of nerves or muscles; and complications with the composition and, or operation of bones and joints... (GoN, 2008)

Implications of this text include that a person's "total or partial physical" disability may be measured through medical tests and the NLDIC diagnose someone's ability by categorising them into 'abled' and 'disabled' groups.

The Diagnosis and Identification Committee of Disability is consistent with the medical discourse. The *Special Education Policy* (GoN, 1996) mentioned that the government formed a sub-committee to determine the level of disability. The committee has the following members:

- A Representative from the Special Education Council- Member
- An Expert from Tribhuvan University (TU) - Member
- A Representative from the Disabled Welfare Protection Fund – Member
- A representative from medical (Ear, Nose and Throat) Doctor from TU Teaching Hospital – Member
- A Representative from the Ministry of Social Welfare – Member

This includes four ‘experts’ and one member is representing that Disabled Welfare Protection Fund. This sub-committee has the power to determine who is disabled and who is not. Within this committee, there are different experts who are perceived to have the knowledge and experience to diagnose an individual’s disability. A representative member from the Disabled Welfare Protection Fund speaks on behalf of disabled people. For example, commenting on what educational context is suitable for them. Although the experts on the panel may listen to her or his suggestions, they are not bound to follow these.

The concept of normal

As described in Chapter 1, the term ‘normal’ is a socially constructed idea. If disability is constructed on the basis of the term ‘normal’ it will be problematic because the disability is determined on the basis of a set of pre-determined medical criteria: ‘who is normal/ abnormal?’ by a team of professional experts. For example, Nepal has made significant changes in girls’ education. When concepts change over time and place, these changes show how these concepts are socially constructed. When my mother was a child, girls were not expected, or even allowed, to go to school. In 1960, learning was constructed as not necessary or useful for girls. Girls were socially constructed as not capable of learning, or didn’t need the kind of learning that was presented in school. But expectations for who can learn and who should go to school have changed. By 1985 my sister did go to school. She has

gone on to be a teacher. Thus, in one generation the dominant construction of what is *normal* for girls' education and employment has shifted. Girls' ability to learn has also come to be seen as *normal*.

Similarly, the concept of 'disability' has been socially constructed in policy texts and socio-cultural traditions in Nepal. The term 'normal' is used to define 'difference' or 'disability' in several Nepali policy documents. For instance, the following two policy texts illustrate how the term 'normal' is used to construct 'disability'. These excerpts are taken from the *Disabled Welfare and Protection Act* (GoN, 1982) and *New Era* (2001).

Disabled person means a Nepali citizen who is physically or mentally unable or handicapped to undertake normal daily life or work. This expression also includes a blind, one-eyed, deaf dumb, dull, crippled, limb, lame, handicapped with one leg broken, handicapped with one hand broken, or a feeble-minded person (Disabled Welfare and Protection Act (GoN, 1982, p. 1).

The definition of disability considers a person to be disabled if the person cannot perform the daily activities of life considered normal for a human being within the specified age range... (New Era, 2001, p. 2)

These definitions of disability highlight the strong influence of the notion of normal and deficit discourse. These policy texts imply that disabled people cannot do something when compared to non-disabled people. The notion of normal is also used to categorise difference between people who might fit in the 'normal' grouping and others who do not. This suggests that disability was dominantly constructed because someone's disability was measured through the concept of normal on the basis of the physical form (e.g., one hand broken) and ability (e.g., unable to perform a cognitive task or unable to perform normal daily work) of the human body. Loss of some part of the body does not mean that he/she cannot perform well in day-to-day work or normal activities. As a consequence, the concept of normal categorises people and is taken for granted knowledge rather than critiquing the concept of normal. This is similar to the dominant construction of disability such as "disability as physical incapacity" (Fulcher, 1989, p. 26), and that something is 'wrong' with a person (Oliver as cited in Valle & Connor, 2011). This reveals that the language of policy texts used

the term *normal* to define the disability and the disabled person. Such kinds of deficit constructions about disabled people become the overall understandings of non-disabled people. As a consequence, non-disabled people's attitudes towards disabled people are revealed through the use of terms such as “mentally unable” and “unable to do normal daily work” in the policy text. From 1982 to 2006, the definition of disability in Nepali policy documents was consistent.

However, the *National Policy and Plan of Action on Disability (NPPAD)* (GoN, 2006c) uses slightly positive language to define disability. The *NPPAD* defines:

Disability is the condition of difficulty in carrying out daily activities normally and in taking part in social life due to problems in parts of the body and the physical system as well as obstacles created by physical, social, cultural environment and by communication (GoN, 2006c, p.7)

What is significant in this definition is the recognition of physical, social, cultural, environmental and communication contexts. Disability was clearly defined as more than an individual trait, for example, the “condition of difficulty in carrying out daily activities ... obstacles created by physical, social, cultural environment” (GoN, 2006c). This may be due to the influence of language in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, 2006) and the changing conceptualisation of disability to becoming increasingly viewed by non-disabled people through interpreting disability through a social model. This suggests the influence of language as described by Burr (2015) “...the nature of language as constantly changing and varied in its meanings is the keystone of social constructionism” (p. 52). It is unclear if Nepali policymakers considered the contexts within which a person lived and worked during the development of policies affecting disabled people. The concept of *normal* itself is problematic because it is socially constructed, yet it is a feature in Nepali policy texts and day-to-day practices. The term is open to interpretation, changes across the time and cultures, is based on socio-cultural assumptions and is taken-for-granted knowledge (Burr, 2015). Constructions are evident everywhere. Some constructions

are more evident in the policy documents, whereas some constructions are more evident in everyday practices. These constructions reflect the existing dominant constructions or challenge the dominant constructions or may not change in day-to-day practices.

Another example of the social construction of normal is evident from the interview data. Ram (a student with disability) shared his experiences;

As my mother told me, “I was a very active, normal and healthy baby... I have everything like my sister and brother have in their bodies, such as a nose, eyes, tongue...my identity changed after my sixth birthday from normal to XXX-eyed...because I lost my eyesight...

Semi-structured interview on 15th April, 2015

Ram’s experience reflects that people recognise someone’s ‘ability’ and ‘disability’ on the basis of their ability to do or achieve things. Ram was identified as ‘normal’ before, and ‘disabled’ after, his sixth birthday due to the loss of vision. In this narrative, two characteristics of normal are evident: ‘active’ and ‘healthy’, which are socially constructed. Although Ram had lost vision, he could work, walk, eat, and hear just like other ‘normal’ people. However Ram was constructed as a ‘sick person’ and, therefore, disabled. People have viewed Ram’s vision impairment as dominating all aspects of his being, despite Ram not having a problem with other parts of his body or its functioning (e.g., hearing, mobility). The next section explores the role of the professional experts in deciding important things for disabled students.

Professional experts deciding important things about disabled students

Recommendations and decisions made by professional experts play an important role in the education and health of disabled people. The term ‘professional expert’ refers to medical doctors, psychologists, special teachers, speech language therapists, special subject experts and nurses who decide and prescribe what individuals with disabilities need or can gain access to. Several Nepali policy documents are influenced by professional experts’ recommendations for disabled students’ education. For instance, the Special Education

Council (SEC) has the following members to formulate and manage Special Education Policy for special needs children, including disabled students.

Minister of State for Education and Sports - Chairperson
Member of National Planning Commission, (education sector) - Member
Secretary, Ministry of Education - Member
Joint Secretary (Education Administration Division) the Ministry - Member
Representative, Ministry of Finance - Member
Representative, Ministry for Women, Children and Social Welfare - Member
Head of Ear, Nose, and Throat Department, Bir Hospital - Member
Chairperson, National Federation of the Disabled Nepal - Member
One person nominated by the Ministry from amongst the specialists on special education - Member
One person nominated by the Special Education Council from amongst the teachers in special education – Member
One person nominated by the Special Education Council from among those disabled who have made a special contribution to the promotion of the disabled – Member
Director General of the Department of Education- Member Secretary
(GoN, 2002, pp. 72-74)

Two of the 12 members of Nepal's Special Education Council (SEC) are disabled people. The membership of this SEC committee reflects that different professional people, who have expertise in special education, are involved in developing educational policies for disabled students. A team of experts may listen to non-disabled SEC members' suggestions, but they are not bound to follow their suggestions (while they are drafting the education policy for disabled students). A team of professional experts determine and decide for children with disabilities' education. This suggests that professional experts have the authority to legitimatise/legalise 'disability' through their own professional practices in line with medical discourse assumptions (Fulcher, 1989) and beliefs of 'who is normal', as defined above. Thus, professional experts' recommendations play an important role in determining what kind of education is appropriate for children who are perceived as different by having deficits or being disabled in Nepal. The dominant understanding of disability or difference as 'abnormal' will be further discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to Skidmore's (2002) 'educability of students' dimension of pedagogical discourse.

Disability as an individual problem

The medical discourse of disability defines children or adults with differences or disabilities as being an individual with deficits (Fulcher, 1989; Selvaraj, 2016). ‘Difference’ or ‘deficit’ is an individual problem that can be overcome by interventions and inputs from professionals. The aims of intervention are to support children to become more like others or closer to the ‘normal’ population. The conceptualisation of disability as an individual problem is evident in various Nepali policy documents. For example, Articles 2.4 and 2.5 of the *Disability Rights Bill* (GoN, 2017a) explains that the procedures for the identification of disability are based on a medical doctor’s recommendation letter. The *Disability Rights Bill* guidelines for the disability identification criteria reflect that disability is a personal health problem or “personal trouble” (Fulcher, 1989, p. 27). The next section explores the neoliberal approach to manage disability in Nepal.

4.2.2 Neoliberal approach to manage disability in Nepal

The government of Nepal adopted a neoliberal policy to education throughout the 1990s (see Chapter 1). Concepts and practices that underpin neoliberalism include privatisation, marketisation, decentralisation, choice, accountability and cost recovery strategies. For example, neoliberal practices in education include tuition fee schemes; performance-based funding and merit-based scholarships, with the view that these increase the quality of education (Bhatta, 2009; Millar & Morton, 2007). Under neoliberal education reforms, for-profit organisations become active in the provision of educational services using mechanisms such as the decentralisation of administrative management systems (Ross & Gibson, 2007). This may mean that a neoliberal government focuses on privatisation; individual rights; marketisation; choice; competition and decentralisation which are the guiding principles of the marketisation model of education. In the current study, three elements are identified and

discussed on the basis of a neoliberal approach to managing education for disabled persons:

1) managing resources; 2) marketisation; and 3) decentralisation.

Managing resources

Managing disability is the main focus of a corporate-managerial discourse of disability (Fulcher, 1989). This discourse emerged among professionals in government welfare agencies and private sector rehabilitation companies as a response to manage disability (Fulcher, 1989; Millar & Morton, 2007). This discourse interprets disability as an issue of allocating resources for the benefit of disabled persons. People with disabilities are entitled to have a range of support and resources. A team of professional experts identify who is eligible and who is not on the basis of a set of resource funding criteria. As a consequence, the government of Nepal focuses on providing resource funds for disabled students' education on the basis of their severity level of disability (see Table 4.1).

Another example of managing resources is evident in the *School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP) 2009-2015* (MoE, 2009). The *SSRP* has emphasised building 100 new schools to meet the requirements of students with disabilities. The government builds special schools for disabled children. Allocating the country's financial resources to building these schools sends a message to educators that separating students based on disability is good practice. The three elements of a resource-management approach to disability are: a) resource allocation criteria; b) a team of professional experts decide the allocations of resource funds; and c) competing for limited resources.

Resource allocation criteria

Nepal's Ministry of Education provides funding for disabled children on the basis of their identified category and severity of disability. This contributes to "a hierarchy of disability" and a complex procedural process for allocating funding (Fulcher, 1989, p. 32). There are certain procedures to follow in order to claim funding for children with disabilities in schools.

This involves a school completing and submitting a form before enrolling children with disabilities.

A team of professional experts decide the allocations of resource funds

As stated above, a team of professional experts decide who is eligible for resource funding and who is not on the basis of pre-determined criteria. There is no guarantee that every student who applies for resource funding will receive support. If the Ministry of Education does not approve the funding, the school may choose not to enrol the student. This element of resource allocation criteria supports the medical discourse of disability. The *Special Education Operation Manual* (GoN, 2003), rule nos. 13.2 and 14.4, states that the Department of Education (DoE) provides teachers and other resources on the basis of number of students and their types of disabilities. For example -

- 12 deaf students equal to 1 teacher
- 10 visually impaired students equal to 1 teacher
- 8 mentally retarded students equal to 1 teacher
- 18 physically disabled students equal to 1 teacher

(GoN, 2003, pp. 14-16)

These policy guidelines can be interpreted in several ways. The first interpretation is that schools do not enrol disabled students until they receive sufficient resources, including special teachers, to teach disabled students. The second interpretation is that a team from the resource funding approval committee in the DoE has the authority to decide who receives resource funding and who does not. They review and approve or decline resource funding applications on the basis of pre-determined criteria.

Slee (2013) stated “Exclusion and inclusion raises the fundamental question of unequal power relations in the Australian context. Who is in and who is out in the school? How come?” (p.905). Slee’s comments were in the Australian context - a developed country. However, these questions are also relevant to the Nepali context in that students’ ability to access education at their local school is determined by a team of professionals who allocate

resources. These teams include government officers who have the power to decide who enrolls in school and who does not.

The third interpretation of the Nepali policy guidelines is that teachers may believe they are not capable of, or responsible for, teaching disabled students in regular classrooms because they think they do not have sufficient teaching skills. This also relates to Skidmore's deviance discourse dimension of the educability of students (see Chapter 5). These interpretations indicate the medical discourse and corporate-managerial discourse of disability.

Competing for limited resources

As discussed above, a team of professionals decide who is eligible for resource funding and who is not. If some children, whose resource funding application is not approved by the DoE, there will not be any provision in Nepali policies to appeal the outcome of this process. This can lead to disabled students and their families being left with no right to appeal a decision to exclude them from school in Nepal. This may reflect the dilemma schools and families face when the resource funding they apply for (and think they deserve to be able to support the child as best as possible) is not provided. It indicates that disabled children are competing for limited resources. Competing for limited resource funding is not only an issue for least developed or developing countries like Nepal, but also an issue in developed countries, such as New Zealand. Macartney and Morton (2013) reported that there is no guarantee that everyone will receive resource funding for education in New Zealand.

Marketisation

As explained in Chapter 1, privatisation, marketisation and decentralisation are the main characteristics of a neoliberal policy (Harvey, 2005). The government of Nepal has committed to provide quality education for all children, including disabled students in several policy documents through the marketisation model of education in the *Seventh Five Year*

Development Plan, 1985-1990 (National Planning Commission [NPC], 1985). According to the marketisation model of education, two elements are identified and discussed: a) the purpose of education; and b) competition and choice.

The purpose of education

In neoliberal policy, education is designed and provided to fit the needs of business or the market. The neoliberal approach views education as a private good. A neoliberal State expects that every citizen should be involved in continuous self-enterprise (Harvey, 2005). Thus, the purpose of education is to produce students who can contribute to a country's economic success by becoming an employee or entrepreneur (O'Neil, 1986 as cited in Sharma Poudyal, 2016). This suggests that economic goals are educational priorities as opposed to social goals. Individualism and choice are core values of neoliberal education. The government of Nepal introduced a policy of private sector involvement to increase the competitiveness, efficiency and relevance of education. This was evident in the *Tenth Five Year Plan 2002-2006* (NPC, 2002). For instance, the *Tenth Five Year Plan 2002-2006* states:

...it has been necessary to make education more competitive; including the role of the private sector to make it more effective, relevant, and opportunistic... (NPC, 2002, p. 452)

These policy guidelines focus on more competitive free market education through privatisation. These features of policy texts suggest a neoliberal approach to education that places priority on “competition”, “effectiveness” “quality” and “privatisation”. A possible neoliberal interpretation of this is that the wellbeing of every human being may be best advanced by harnessing individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade (Harvey, 2005). The private sector is seen as a more productive and responsive enterprise in comparison to the public sector in a neoliberal state (Harris, 2007). As a consequence, under neoliberal policies, education is a market commodity that has economic value. Hence, a

neoliberal assumption is that a competitive free market will maintain a balance between demand and supply in education.

Competition and school choice

As stated in Chapter 1, the neoliberal theory of education places high priority on competition and choice. The competitive free market provides parents with more choices in selecting schools for enrolling their children. Schools also have choice to select students. This may see schools competing for ‘high achieving’ students and parents choosing the ‘best’ school for their child on the basis of schools’ standardised test results. In Nepal, school choice is evident in the *Tenth Five Year Development Plan* (2002-2006). It states,

School choice is an important aspect of providing excellence for all students and their families... (NPC, 2002, p.452)

This policy text indicates that parents have the right to choose a school on the basis of the school’s results and schools have the right to select students according to their performance. This notion of choice for parents and schools is supported by several international and national researchers (Dudley-Marling & Baker, 2012; Gordon & Morton, 2008; Sharma Poudyal, 2016; Slee, 2011; Poudel, 2007). In Nepal, parents categorise schools on the basis of the school's performance on national standardised test results: the School Leaving Certification (SLC) examination in Nepal. Parents, therefore, have a choice to enrol their children in a perceived ‘good’ school on the basis of SLC test result scores. The school also has the option to selectively enrol students based on their test results. This may also signal that the school may not be ready to enrol the children with disabilities because school administrators may believe that disabled students are unable to compete academically with non-disabled students because they have lack of cognitive ability (see further discussion in Chapter 5).

Decentralisation

A feature of the neoliberal theory of education emphasises decentralised administration of school management. The *Tenth Five Year Plan* (2002-2006) of Nepal introduced a policy of decentralisation to transfer education power from central government to local school management committees. For example, the plan states:

The tenth plan will be oriented towards assigning responsibility of school management to the local level...ensuring public participation in the formulation of appropriate policies and plans, management, implementation and monitoring to maintain quality... by following the policy of decentralization... (NPC, 2002, p.452)

These policy guidelines devolve responsibility to local communities through mechanisms such as School Management Committees (SMC). This policy text reveals that the government of Nepal has been implementing a decentralisation agenda since 1990. Three aspects of decentralisation include: a) accountability; b) control from donor; and c) school improvement plan.

Accountability

Accountability is connected to school choice, as mentioned above. The neoliberal policy reforms focus on individual input, output and accountability for investments. The Tenth Five Year Development Plan endorsed that all schools should be accountable annually for student results. This indicates that the accountability for investments can be measured through standardised tests such as the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) in Nepal. Accountability was further reinforced by the establishment of the Education Review Office (ERO) to carry out the national assessments of student achievement at various grades of school education in order to promote the accountability. For example, Government of Nepal, Education Review Office (ERO) website states goals of ERO (retrieved from <http://www.ero.gov.np/content/goals-and-objectives.html> (GoN, 2017b). It mentions:

Provide regular feedback to entire education system for improving the quality of and equity in education by carrying out independent assessments through National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA), Performance Audit (PA) of schools and institutions... (GoN, 2017b)

Control from donor

Multi-national donor organisations including the World Bank have significantly influenced educational policies in Nepal (Acharya & Acharya, 2004; Bhatta, 2009; Poudel, 2007). For example, the educational budget of Nepal is based on foreign aid from multilateral donors such as: Denmark, Finland, USA, UK, Japan, and a number of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) such as UNICEF, UNDP, and JICA. The donor's agencies do not invest until they are satisfied with government policies (Poudel, 2007). In addition, some authors claim that Nepali educational policies are influenced by the donor country's educational policy. For example, the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) in its Country Assistance Paper mentions, "As one of Nepal's main donors, Denmark is in a good position to influence future policies within the primary education sector" (DANIDA, as cited in Caddell, 2002, p. 87). The next section discusses the school improvement plan.

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) refers to an overall action plan for a school. The main objectives of the SIP are to involve parents, teachers, social activists and other stakeholders in identifying existing educational problems and recommending possible solutions through the SIP. However, during interviews with the participant school administrators, they reported being under instructions to prepare and send school's SIP to the District Education Office (DEO). The administrators described the justification for this is for financial reporting. Participants also reported that implementation of the plans was extremely difficult. I asked the principal of NHSS, "Why did you send a SIP to the District Education Office (DEO), which you could not implement at school? He replied that if school did not send the SIP, the DEO would not approve the school budget. He further stated that the DEO knew that the SIP was "only for the donor". This school administrator's experience suggests that the SIP can be

considered as another form of accountability measure by a neoliberal state (see further discussion in Chapter 5).

4.2.3 Everyday understanding of disability in Nepal

The conceptualisation of disability in the wider Nepali society is aligned with several discourses. These include lay and charity discourses (Fulcher, 1989) and a religious discourse of disability (Das, 2010; Rimmerman, 2013). A lay discourse views disabled people as inferior, dependent, weak, isolated, asexual, marginalised and child-like (Neilson, 2005). Similarly, a charity discourse reinforces the notion of disabled people as incapable of knowing what they want. Under a charity discourse, it is likely that the opinions of disabled people are seen as irrelevant and that decision making is the sole right of charitable organisations. Similarly, when it comes to improving outcomes for disabled people, the opinions and agendas of non-disabled people receive the most attention and funding. The carers are seen as ‘experts’ and disabled people as passive ‘recipients’ who benefit from any help they receive. More recently, the lay and charity discourses have been merged into a religious discourse, which is considered in this study. A religious discourse is mostly observed and practised at a local level, such as a village in Nepal where more than 80 percent of people align with the Hindu religion.

A particular religious discourse relevant to Nepal is the Karma religious discourse which is based on the Karma theory of Hindu religion. Das (2010) and Rimmerman (2013) define it as a morality discourse of disability. The word ‘Karma’ is derived from the Sanskrit language that means *Kirya*- action or work. Karma supports a belief in the spiritual principle of cause and effect where good intentions and actions give good Karma and future happiness and prosperity whereas bad actions bring bad Karma and future pain (Das, 2010). Also, Das (2010) defines that religious discourse is a morality model of disability that considers

disability resulting from one's "moral lapse and brings shame to the individual and to the family" (Das, 2010, p. 132).

Causality, ethicisation and rebirth are the main principles of the Karma theory (Krishan, 1997). The principle of causality prevails in the *Brihadaranyaka, Upanishad* of Hinduism (Reichenbach, 1988). The causality principle refers to the actions of an individual affecting another person's life. It further suggests that the effect of Karma can be reflected later in the future. This may mean that if I do something bad in a previous life, I have to pay for it in the next life. The second theory is ethicisation, which means that every action has a consequence (Boyce, Malakar, Millman & Bhattarai, 1999) and may give results immediately or in a future life (see *reincarnation* below). If I do a good thing, it will bring a good result to me and my family. The ethicisation principle is also called an ethical theory. The causality and ethicisation principle seem to be similar to those that are based on cause and effect, and moral ethics. The third theory is reincarnation (the cycle of the rebirths), which is a controversial theory. Reincarnation is the belief that all life forms go through a cycle of rebirths. Bowker (1997) states that every living being's soul recycles after death and carrying the seeds of *Karmic* impulses of life just completed into another life. If someone breaks this cycle of rebirths, they may not reach '*Moksa*'- emancipation, liberation and release. As a result, they may rebirth as a 'different' or 'deficit' or 'disabled person'.

In summary, the religious discourse identifies disabled people as inferior, dependent, weak, isolated, asexual, marginalised, privileged, burden and sinful action of the past. Six elements of religious discourse include: 1) disability as God's curse and Karmic action; 2) charitable support; 3) isolation; 4) burden; 5) identity ; and 6) stigmatisation.

Disability as cause of God's curse and Karmic action

Many people in Nepal believe that disability is a result of bad Karma, sinful actions in the past life and a curse of god (K.C., 2016; Maudslay, 2014). Bad Karma (Lamichhane, 2011) denotes a sinful action in the past, fate and god's curse (Boyce, Malakar, Millman & Bhattarai, 1999; Kalyanpur & Gowramma, 2007; Krishan, 1997) in the Hindu religion. The influence of the Karma discourse on people's understandings and views about disability means that some people may interpret disability as a punishment for things a person committed in a past life. Similarly, Schuelka (2015), who conducted a study in Bhutan, reported that disability is taken as a bad Karma/action in a past life. In this way, disability can be recognised as something that you are responsible for, yet you cannot change. People perceive that a disabled person has to live his or her life with the negative consequences of his or her impairment as a responsibility for sinful actions in a previous life. This has implications for how others see a disabled person: for example, needing or being entitled to support. Individuals may choose not to help the disabled person as they believe that it is that person's journey that he or she has to follow. The family is seen as responsible for supporting the disabled family members rather than the community. A further consequence of this view is that it can convey a message to people without disabilities to stay away from disabled people to avoid the risk of being contaminated or infected by the 'sinful action'.

Charitable support

The charity discourse explains that persons with disabilities need support and help from charitable organisations (Fulcher, 1989). These organisations include local charitable trusts, International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and philanthropic support of disabled students' education in Nepal (Kafle, 2002; Lamichhane, 2015). The *Disabled Persons and Welfare Rules (DPWR)* (GoN, 1994) state that the government of Nepal provides necessary assistance if any NGOs or charitable

organisations are interested in providing education or training for disabled persons (DPWR rule no. 15, GoN, 1994). A possible interpretation of this is that the government of Nepal may encourage charitable trusts to support disabled persons' welfare. This policy text indicates that disability is an object requiring the support from charitable trusts rather than the State. I am not arguing against providing support for disabled people, my argument is that people think they need to support disabled people because they are incapable of work. This creates the opportunity for charitable organisations to exist and flourish.

Isolation

The religious discourse of disability and its associated deficit thinking can lead to the isolation of disabled people (K.C., 2016). A finding of the current study is that isolation is a consequence of labelling students with disabilities as being entitled to certain resourcing and limiting access to learning opportunities alongside their peers. If non-disabled people, including teachers, interpret disability as a personal health problem, they may restrict their interactions with disabled students due to unfounded fears. As a result, disabled students may be isolated from school activities. The following comments from Gita, a student participant, supported this notion:

I always reached school at 9.30 am. I kept my school bag on the desk. My friends were playing in the school playground... but I sat in the classroom... The school bell rang at 9.45 am for Morning Prayer. All students went for Morning Prayer in the assembly ground but I could not... I had to sit inside the classroom...

Semi-structured interview on 6th April, 2015

In this narrative, Gita perceived that she was isolated and was not supported to attend the assembly because of her impairment. This may mean that the school identified Gita as not needing access to some of the day-to-day activities that non-disabled students were expected to attend. There was nothing to suggest that Gita could not go out and join in assembly with her peers. There are four possible interpretations about why Gita could not join morning assembly. The first is that Gita was denied going to morning assembly due to her label of

impairment. The second interpretation is that the school did not have an accessible assembly ground with supports for Gita. The third interpretation of this is that teacher thought it would be a good idea to exclude Gita in the school assembly due to health and safety issues. Gita's disability is a cause for the school to exclude her from some school activities. A fourth possibility is that non-disabled parents requested the school not to mix their children with disabled children. This links to medical-religious discourse of disability because the school may be constructed Gita's disability as a personal health problem and a *Karmic* action (Fulcher, 1989; Rimmerman, 2013).

The participant children with visual impairments shared their experience of going to the 'Resource classroom' or 'Hostel' at lunch time. They did not join with the other students to eat, socialise or play during the school lunch break. Gita reported that this would exclude her from meeting her non-disabled friends. She thought that her disability was isolating her from others. Interestingly, this finding is consistent with MacArthur's (2013) finding that disabled students were socially isolated during the break times in primary and secondary schools in New Zealand.

In Nepal, many students with disabilities were required to sit alone in the classroom during the morning assembly and extracurricular activities. This appears to be due to a lack of an accessible infrastructure and health and safety issues within the school. If teachers pause to consider these limited opportunities for students, they could observe how little agency the students have to challenge what may be seen as a natural way of being within their school community (Ballard, 2013). For example, during my visit to Gita's school I observed a programme entitled 'Project Gagaab-2016' that was financially supported by Singapore Management University (SMU). This was an 'Entrepreneurial Community Project in NHSS' that aimed to develop students' entrepreneurial skills. All students without disabilities actively participated in this and appeared to enjoy the programme. I asked the school

principal about Ram and Gita. He told me that they might be in the “Project Gagaab-2016” programme. However, I could not find them in the programme. I asked the other students, who did not know where Gita and Ram were. Eventually, a resource teacher suggested they might be in the hostel. I went to the hostel where I met Ram and Gita. Ram was sunbathing on the top floor of the hostel and Gita was sleeping in her room. I also noticed that other disabled students were sleeping in the room. I asked Gita, Ram and other disabled students why they did not participate in the programme. They told me that they were discriminated, isolated and given a low priority to participate in the programme. However, I observed that non-disabled students were actively involved in the ‘Project Gagaab-2016’. One set of expectations constructs students as active learners, whereas another constructs some students as not needing to learn or participate.

Burden

The term ‘burden’ has an objective and subjective meaning in the health care literature. The events and activities associated with negative caregiving experiences relate to an objective meaning. In contrast, feelings aroused in caregivers support a subjective meaning (Hoenig & Hailton, as cited in Cho, 2000). The negative attitudes and actions of the research participants (e.g., teachers) in this study towards disabled students indicate that these students may be perceived as a burden. Similarly families and other stakeholder may interpret disability as a burden. As a consequence, some people may be reluctant to admit or acknowledge that a person in their family or community has a disability. For instance, some participant students with disabilities were not invited to community social functions due to their ‘disability’. Ram shared his experience:

There was a marriage ceremony in my relatives’ house. We got a *Chule nimto* (all family members invitation), except me. I sat in my home while my mother, sister and brother went to the ceremony.

Semi-structured interview on 15th April, 2015

Ram's experience reflected a powerful message about Nepali peoples' cultural beliefs and attitudes towards disabled people. A possible interpretation of this is that Ram's non-participation in the marriage ceremony may be that his family did not want to transmit 'god's curse' to the newly married couple or to other people in the marriage ceremony. As a consequence, Ram's family may perceive his disability as a burden. This links to the Karma discourse of disability because people constructed Ram's disability as a result of bad *Karmic* actions and the god's curse. Similarly, Slee (2011) reported that parents, who feel cultural or religious shame associated with having a disabled child, keep their children away from school in African and Indian societies.

Identity

A student's identity reflects interactions between themselves and the community they engage in (Biklen, 2000). If people perceive different, deficit or disability, as a negative trait, they define disabled people as an "object of pity" (Borsay, as cited in Fulcher, 1989, p. 28). Non-disabled people perceive disabled people as an object of pity in this study. For example, one participant teacher, Hari, reflected upon his experience of being judged by others as an object of pity:

When I was walking here, people were saying... *Ch! Ch! Kathii Bichara* (to express pity or someone! -
Semi-structured interview on 15th April, 2015

Hari's comments show how non-disabled people identified him as an object by using pity terms in the Nepali language such as "*Kathi Bichara*" - a Nepali word used to express sympathy. A possible interpretation of this is that people express their sympathy towards Hari because they may think Hari needs support from non-disabled people. Another example of the charity and lay discourse is evident in Ram's (disabled student) experience. He shared his experience:

My friends, teachers and non-teaching staff perceive me as needing help and blame through a judgemental eye. When I walk around the school ground... they start to say ... (च्व...! च्व...!! कठैबरा !बिचरा जिन्दगी कसरी बिताउछ होला यसले भविष्यमा...?) a very poor boy! Pity!! How will I spend my life in the future?

Semi-structured interview on 15th April, 2015

Ram's comments illustrate how teachers and non-teaching staff noticed him as an "object of pity and a burden". Teaching and non-teaching staff noticed Ram's disability through notions of pity, charity, burden and incompetency in the Nepali language as, "च्व...! च्व...!! कठैबरा !बिचरा" (*a very poor boy*). Ram's disability was labelled by a negativity and inferiority as 'a very poor boy'. Teaching and non-teaching staff in the school failed to notice Ram's abilities and strengths that could support his learning. His comments also demonstrate his awareness that other people may not perceive him as being of value in their community. Non-disabled person comments focused on 'what Ram cannot do compared with others, rather than his strengths'. In this example, Ram's disability is constructed as a negative image of disability. These signal both medical and religious discourses of disability because the medical discourse defines disability as a personal problem (of Ram). Similarly, the religious discourse interprets disability as a cause of 'sinful actions of past work' (of Ram or his family members) (Das, 2010). As a consequence, Ram is further differentiated from others in the school in terms of how his disability is identified and treated in judgements by teachers and students (Allan, 1996; Macartney, 2011). Ram and Hari are not alone in these experiences. Researchers have reported similar observations in India (Das, 2010), New Zealand and Australia (Kearney 2009; Macartney, 2011; MacArthur, 2013). Identifying every student as a valuable learner helps teachers to teach them using an inclusive pedagogy. Recognising students' identities informs teachers to design their lesson plans with a view to meeting all students' learning goals. The next section explores dual identity.

Dual identity

As described in Chapter 1, Nepali society categorises people into four castes. This means people's identities are closely related to their caste. For example, a person belonging to a

caste such as *Dalit*, is given a lower status in the Nepali community. If a person from a lower caste has a disability, he/she will be recognised as valueless and worthless in the wider Nepali society. If a person has both of these labels, he/she will be given a ‘dual identity’ that is similar to a “second-class citizen” (Lawson, 2001, p. 203). The second-class citizen refers to disabled people’s rights that are inferior in comparison to non-disabled people’s rights. For instance, Ram is a disabled person who is a member of the *Dalit* community. At birth, Ram received his identity as an ‘untouchable’ and ‘impure’ person. The second identity he received at age six years, when he became a ‘boy with a visual impairment’. His friends began to refer to him as “*Ande-Bande Dalit Ram*” (*Blind Untouchable Ram*). Not only does Ram’s legal status change, but children give him a new name. This example illustrates how school-based attitudes and behaviours can affect a child’s contribution and feelings of self-worth within their wider life. Ram appeared to be discriminated against and bullied by able-bodied people who chose a new name for him and decided that he could no longer participate in learning. This indicates the medical and religious-discourse of disability because teachers, non-teaching staff and non-disabled students interpret Ram’s disability as Ram’s personal problem by using negative language to give Ram’s a new identity as, “*Ande-Bande Dalit*”. Ram does not resist these changes because he is powerless compared to non-disabled people. As a disabled *Dalit* child, Ram does not have the voice and power to challenge the dominant discourses evident in the school practices. The next section demonstrates stigmatisation.

Stigmatisation

Stigma denotes negative and biased ways in which disabled people are labelled (Agbenyega, 2003; Fine & Asch, 1988). Within this study, stigma arose from traditional and cultural beliefs, superstition, lack of knowledge and fear. For instance, people in rural villages in Nepal continue to believe in the shamans/*Dhami*, who can cure any kind of disease, even if that disease is seen as the result of Karma. Stigma is reflected through cultural beliefs in this

study. For instance, Ram's parents took Ram to *Dhami* in hope of returning his eyesight. Ram shared his experiences:

My parents took me to 'Dhami'/Shamans who was able to cure different kinds of disease by worshipping god. The *Dhami* claimed that my vision loss was due to the "angry *Kalo Masan* and *Kula Deutta*" (an angry house's god and black monster). If the *Dhami* worshipped his house god and black monster by cutting a black goat at midnight, my eyesight would return...

Semi-structured interview on 15th April, 2015

Ram's comments illustrated that his parents believed in *Dhami*'s ability to cure his vision difficulties. This is a common practice in rural Nepal. *Dhami* diagnosed and determined that Ram's eye problem was caused by an angry god. *Dhami* recommended solutions to cure Ram's eye as well. The solution was to undertake worship towards god. Although medical science uses research and technologies, such as computer programs to cure disease or assist disabled persons, many people in Nepal continue to believe in the support of spiritual shamans to resolve any disease, disability and impairment in order to help their family members attain a 'normal' life. This links to the medical-religious discourse of disability because Ram's parent perceives that Ram's eye sight is a kind of disease due to bad *Karmic* action (e.g. an angry god) that can be cured by worshipping the angry gods "*Kalo Masan* and *Kula Deutta*" by cutting a black goat (a course of treatment). This suggests that disability is still perceived as a stigma in Nepali society because people believe that disability results from bad *Karmic* actions. As a consequence, disabled people may experience fear, anger, and embarrassment from non-disabled people in the community. If disabled people and their families perceive negative attitudes towards them, self-stigmatisation and self-blaming can occur (Baffoe, 2013). The next section explores understanding disability as a social responsibility issue in Nepal.

4.2.4 Understanding disability as a social issue in Nepal

The rights-based discourse of disability is based on the notion of human rights. The United Nation developed the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR)* after World War II.

The *UDHR* endorsed civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in the 1950s. However, people with disabilities around the world, including Nepal, do not fully enjoy these rights, historically and culturally (Ballard, 1994; Ferguson, Ferguson & Taylor, 1992; Lamichhane, 2015). All individuals are entitled to be treated with dignity and to have the rights to freedom, equality and education (United Nations, 1948). The rights discourse of disability is based on understandings of disablement through the use of a social model of disability (Allan, 1999; Gabel, 2005; Thomas, 2004).

The human rights discourse advocates equality of citizenship, equal opportunities, and equal participation from a personal and political perspective (Fulcher, 1989, 1990; United Nations, 2014). It respects and celebrates human diversity; different or deficit is not a personal problem but a social responsibility. It promotes and advocates for democratic values and norms, social justice, equality, access and rights for everyone including persons with disabilities (Fulcher, 1989).

According to Fulcher's rights-based discourse of disability, every person, including disabled people, has equal opportunities, equal participation, equality of citizenship and access to education in regular classroom as their fundamental rights. One element, 'education as a fundamental right for everyone' is evident in the data.

Education as a fundamental right for everyone

Several policies endorse education as a fundamental right for every citizen in Nepal, including marginalised and disabled people (GoN, 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2014, 2015, 2017a; MoE, 2003). This suggests that all children, including those considered disabled are entitled to receive an education in the local school regardless of their physical needs, culture, caste and financial status. For instance, the following two policy texts illustrate a rights-based approach to education for all children in Nepal including disabled students. These excerpts are taken from the Constitution of Nepal (GoN, 2015) and Department of Education

definition of inclusive education. In the Constitution under rights to education, Article 31(1, 2, 3, and 4) states free education for all people in line with rights-based discourse that state:

1. Every citizen shall have the right to access basic education.
2. Every citizen shall have the right to compulsory and free education up to the basic level and free education up to the secondary level from the State.
3. Citizens with disabilities and the economically indigent citizens shall have the right to get free higher education in accordance with law.
4. Visually impaired citizens shall have the right to get free education through braille script and citizens with hearing or speaking impairment, to get free education through sign language, in accordance with law. (GoN, 2015)

Definition of inclusive education:

Inclusive education as the developmental process of an education system that provides the right for all children to have useful education in non-discriminatory environments within their own community by upholding multicultural differences of the country... DoE has identified the following as the target groups of its inclusive education policies: Girls, Janajati children (ethnic and linguistic group), disabled children, street children, child labourers, children affected by conflict, children trafficked for sexual and other purposes, orphans, children affected by HIV, AIDS and Leprosy, children in poverty, *Kamaiya* and bonded labour children, children from language minorities group, refugee children... (GoN, 2007c, p. 4)

The *Constitution of Nepal* (GoN, 2015) and the definition of inclusive education (GoN, 2007c) endorse the rights of all students, including disabled and marginalised children, to access education in regular schools. This suggests that all students are provided a non-discriminatory school culture. The definition reveals that inclusive education is “a developmental process”. One possible interpretation of this is that it may be an impact of global movements, such as *Education for All (EFA)* and local political movements in Nepal, such as *Loktantrik Āndolan/Democracy* movement. As a result, the government of Nepal may be interpreting inclusive education as a developmental approach and process in line with a rights-based discourse of difference. For example, after the *Jomtien Declaration* in 1990, education became a fundamental right for every child. ‘*Education for All*’ and ‘*Free School Education*’ became slogans of the global education movement. In practice, this has resulted in global movement towards quality universal primary education for all children. The guiding principles of different conventions incorporate the concept of inclusive schools and inclusive education (Poudel, 2007). The *EFA* is “a moral and political movement for developing

universal system based on equality, entitlement, participation and respect for diversity” (Booth, 2003, p. 3). This means that education should respect equality, participation and respect for all children by including different or deficit or disability in the regular classroom.

The government of Nepal has re-formed exclusionary policies to better align with a rights-based approach to education. For instance, the government of Nepal signed the *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education Declaration* (UNESCO, 1994) that is an important step towards inclusive and special education. The Salamanca declaration recommended the principal of inclusion and school participation for all, including children with disabilities. Article 2 states that special needs children including disabled children should have access to education at regular schools because an inclusive education system should facilitate and ensure lifelong learning opportunities for all learners within a holistic vision of *EFA* (Opertti, Brady & Duncombe, 2009).

However, the government of Nepal endorsed a special education provision for special needs children through the *Special Education Policy* in 1996. A possible interpretation of this action is that the rights-based approach to education is “overtly political” (Fulcher, 1989, p. 30). The government of Nepal has signed and ratified different international conventions on human rights-based approaches to education, but has not implemented these in school practices. For example, the government of Nepal endorsed a special education policy for children with different or who are disabled, in 1996. This may mean that the human rights-based approach to education is the development of another form of special education in Nepal, not dissimilar to that experienced in New Zealand. Selvaraj (2016) argued that Fulcher’s rights-based discourse of disability provided a paradigm shift in the development of special education in New Zealand.

4.3 Summary

This chapter investigated how discourses of disabilities have constructed disability and how the disabling consequences impacted on disabled students' access to learning in Nepali schools. The Nepali policies, practices and the research participants' experiences were influenced by the four discourses of disabilities: medical, corporate-managerial religious and rights-based (Das, 2010; Fulcher, 1989; Rimmerman, 2013). These four discourses were then merged into two discourses: 'discourse of deviance/deficit/disability' and 'discourse of difference/inclusion'. Features of medical-religious-neoliberal or corporate-managerial discourses of disability represent a 'discourse of deviance or deficit or disability' and elements of a rights-based discourse of disability reveal a 'discourse of difference or inclusion'. Overall, this chapter reported that 'disability' was constructed by a dominant deficit discourse. The four key ideas are identified and discussed in this chapter: disability as a problem (individual and social), a team of professional experts diagnose and identify disability, a team of professional experts decide important things for disabled people and disability as a resource management. Furthermore, the view of disability as god's curse and *Karmic* action, charitable support, isolation, burden, identity and stigmatisation within Nepal were also considered.

Nepal's educational policies and day-to-day practices are both consistent and inconsistent among the four discourses of disability: medical, corporate-managerial, religious and rights-based. A key consistency is the inclusion of medical personnel (e.g., Doctors) as part of different the *Disability Identification Committees (DICs)*. The *DICs* identify 'difference' or 'deficit' or 'disability' on the basis of pre-determined diagnosis criteria. However, a number of Nepal's policies are inconsistent with the medical discourse (GoN, 2017, 2006c). For example, after 2006, educational policy documents defined disability as having a socially-based problem as opposed to an individual problem. As a result, current

policy documents promote the inclusion of all students, including those who are marginalised or disabled. However, some students' 'difference' or 'deficit' or 'disability' is still measured on the basis of pre-determined medical criteria. This suggests that the Nepal's education policies had mixed or contradictory views towards disability. As a consequence, this contradictory policy creates confusion for teachers trying to make sense of their own positioning on disability. Nepali society interprets disability as a result of bad Karma, which directly leads to discrimination, isolation, stigmatisation, categorisation and exclusion. Students with disabilities are often perceived and understood as a burden, weak, helpless, unproductive, useless, and dependent children by society, the school and, even, the family. In many examples, I see that these traditional ways of thinking about disability are remain uninterrupted. Table 4.2 provides a summary of key ideas of the chapter.

Table 4.2: Summary of key ideas in the chapter

Key ideas	Examples evident in this study
Understanding disability as a medical issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A team of professional experts decide who is dis/abled or normal/abnormal on the basis of pre-determined criteria. • Professional experts decide important things for disabled students: professional experts decide who gets resource funding and who does not, on the basis of disability identification cards. • Students with disability constructed as sick people who need medicine.
Neo-liberal approach to manage disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability constructed as an issue of resource management through the marketisation model of education. • Disabled person constructed as unproductive manpower who do not contribute economically.
Every day understanding of disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with disability recognised as inferior, dependent, weak, isolated, and marginalised person. • Disabled persons identified as passive recipients of help from abled-bodied people. • Disability constructed as a punishment for things a person committed in a past life; bad Karma due to sinful actions in the past, fate and god. • Disability constructed through the eyes of shame, pity, superstition, and isolation.
Understanding disability as a social issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability is not a personal problem; it is a problem due to the inability of society to remove the existing barriers of persons with disabilities. • Disability is a social problem due to obstacles created by physical, social, cultural environment and communication.

The next chapter explores research into the participants' attitudes and beliefs about the educability of students. The experiences of school administrators, teachers, parents, and students with and without disabilities are discussed and analysed by using Skidmore's theoretical model of pedagogical discourse of deviance.

Chapter 5: “No *Ratta*-No Learning”: Understanding teachers’ beliefs and understanding of teaching and learning

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores school administrators’ and the participant teachers’ attitudes, perceptions and beliefs towards inclusive education and how they approach teaching students with disabilities. The narratives and teaching practices of the participant teachers of two higher secondary schools are contrasted with Skidmore’s (2002) theoretical model of the pedagogical discourse of deviance. Skidmore’s pedagogical discourse of deviance supports understanding teachers’ attitudes, inclusive practices and possible barriers to implementing these inclusive practices. The social constructionism and theoretical model of pedagogical discourse provide an avenue to critically analyse the participant teachers’ use of exclusionary practices especially for their disabled students. The chapter then considers the teaching practices and attitudes of the participant teachers in educating disabled students in regular classroom settings. The majority of the participant teachers’ beliefs and experiences of teaching disabled students in regular classrooms are influenced by a wide range of exclusionary practices. The chapter concludes with a summary of key themes identified during the study. The chapter addresses these research questions -

- How do participant school administrators and teachers understand, perceive and experience inclusive practice?
- How do teachers teach students with and without disabilities in the regular classroom?

5.2 A theoretical model of pedagogical discourse

Skidmore (2002) developed ‘*A Theoretical Model of Pedagogical Discourse*’ for teaching learners with special needs in the United Kingdom. In the current research project, Skidmore’s model of pedagogical discourse provides a tool to explore how the participant school administrators and teachers identify the ways they are currently working in two higher

secondary schools in Nepal. Skidmore's model is used to investigate how participant school administrators and teachers made sense of their own professional working theories to include and teach disabled students in regular classrooms. There are opportunities to disrupt exclusive ways of working if the research participants recognise their professional teaching theories by placing all students, including disabled students, at the centre of learning in the regular classroom (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Skidmore's model (2002) identifies two contrasting forms of discourse: one of deviance and another of inclusion. Skidmore uses five dimensions to frame the influences and impacts of these two discourses. These dimensions are: educability; explanation of educational failure; schools' response to students; theory of teaching expertise and curriculum model. Table 5.1 summarizes these dimensions.

Table 5.1: Skidmore's two forms of pedagogical discourse

Dimensions	Discourse of deviance	Discourse of inclusion
Educability of students	There is a hierarchy of educability on which students can be placed	Every student has an open-ended potential for learning
Explanations of educational failure	The source of difficulty in learning lies in deficits of ability which are attributes of the students	The source of difficulty in learning lies in insufficiently responsive presentation of the curriculum
School responses	Support for learning should seek to remediate the weaknesses of individual students	Support for learning should seek to reform curriculum and develop pedagogy across the school
Theory of teaching expertise	Expertise in teaching centres in the possession of specialist subject knowledge	Expertise in teaching centres in engendering the active participation of all students in the learning process
Curriculum model	An alternative curriculum should be provided for the less able	A common curriculum should be provided for all students

Skidmore, (2002, p. 120)

These discourses provide a framework for making sense of how the participant teachers recognise and respond to all children as ‘learners’ in this study. A perspective that is informed by Skidmore’s discourse of deviance identifies a learner with a disability as ‘different’ or ‘abnormal’ compared with a non-disabled student. Some participant teachers reported not seeing teaching disabled students as their professional responsibility and they think disabled children need specialist help to engage with a separate curriculum. Within this discourse, the purpose of teaching disabled children is to improve or correct their weaknesses.

Within a discourse of deviance, any issues related to the child’s learning are conceived of as peculiar to the child. There is no identification that school structures and processes may contribute to children’s learning. The school is not seen as responsible for developing the same curriculum for all students to reflect the diversity of the school community. Expertise in teaching is based on the specialist knowledge of a teacher. Consistent with a discourse of deviance, in the current study, some participant teachers were identified as better able to teach children with disabilities, whereas some participant teachers were recognized as not being required to teach disabled students. Segregation, both, in the physical environment and curriculum were perceived as the best way of working with children who do not conform with notions of intelligence and ability. The discourse of deviance corresponds to the traditional special education approach to pedagogy evident in earlier policies in countries, such as New Zealand, Australia and the UK (Morton, Rietveld, Guerin, McIlroy & Duke, 2012). Similar to this, discourse of deviance is evident in the Nepali policy documents and day-to-day practices. For example, the *Special Education Policy* (Government of Nepal [GoN], 1996) and the *Special Education Operation Manual* (GoN, 2003) recommended a special and integrated school for special needs children,

including disabled students in Nepal. Students with disabilities are assimilated into the integrated classrooms in regular schools (GoN, 1996).

In contrast to the discourse of deviance, Skidmore (2002) highlights how a discourse of inclusion identifies that all children have the potential to learn. All children are seen as having potential to contribute to shared knowledge. From this perspective, the responsibility for identifying ways these students can learn and participate in curriculum is centred within the school. Rather than identifying the problem as residing with the student who has an impairment, the school takes responsibility for developing a responsive curriculum that accommodates and responds to the diversity of its community. Rather than recognizing teaching expertise as a reflection of subject knowledge, the role of the teacher is to facilitate the students to co-construct and make sense of learning together.

Skidmore (2002) described that teachers' understanding about learners shapes their pedagogy. This means that the teachers' understanding of the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and learning can support or limit opportunities for students to reveal what they know and to access learning in a variety of ways, such as 'rote learning' and more 'collaborative teaching strategies'. Teachers within this study appeared to draw on beliefs and values from a discourse of deviance, a discourse of inclusion, or sometimes, a mixture of both within a single day. This can make it difficult for participant teachers to identify exclusive or inclusive ways of working with students. For example, if teachers constructed students through a deficit lens, they were unable to teach all students, including disabled students, by following the same curriculum in the regular classroom as this would restrict disabled students from participating in the teaching and learning process. This links to the discourse of deviance because teachers thought that 'disabled learners' could not learn in the regular class. If the participant teachers thought everyone could learn within the same classroom setting, it

would encourage all students including disabled students to participate in the teaching and learning activities. This indicates a discourse of inclusion and appears to challenge historical constructions for both teachers and learners. Skidmore's pedagogical discourse of deviance helped me to recognise the impact of exclusionary practices by analysing the current working model of NHSS and KHSS.

5.3 Teaching and learning practices in the classroom

This section explores teaching and learning practices in two higher secondary schools - NHSS and KHSS, in Nepal. It draws on semi-structured interviews with participant school administrators, non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews with participant teachers, semi-structured interviews with participant disabled students, and a focus-group interview with students with and without disabilities. The focus is on how the participant teachers made sense of their deficit beliefs and practices in teaching all of their students including disabled students. Six themes are used to understand the ways teachers have identified and responded to the challenges and strengths of students with and without disabilities. Five of the themes are based on Skidmore's discourse of deviance dimensions and one theme (the assessment model) is evident from the data analysed. The analysis and findings of this section are based on the following themes:

- Educability of students
 - Lack of cognitive ability
- Explanations of educational failure
 - Failure due to students' learning problems
 - Failure due to socio-cultural traditions and
 - Failure due to lack of infrastructure
- School response
 - School environment: "*Tamasomaa Jyotiramaya*"
 - School improvement plan
 - Extra remedial teaching for disabled students
- Theory of teaching expertise
 - No *Ratta*- No learning

- Assessment model
 - A separate test paper
- Curriculum model
 - An alternative curriculum for disabled students

5.3.1 Educability of students

Skidmore's pedagogical discourse of deviance of educability views students' cognitive abilities as "bounded and circumscribed by inherent limitations arising from a fixed cognitive ability" (Skidmore, 2002, p.121). The cognitive ability theory supports that the use of an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) scale, which categorizes students' educability by standardized IQ test results. Binet, a French psychologist, developed the IQ theory as a method of identifying children who needed extra help to progress in school. The theory was further developed by American and British psychologists. The educational policies of the USA and the UK were influenced by IQ theory between the 1940s to the 1970s (Skidmore, 2002). Skidmore argues that there is link between the IQ scores of students' achievement and their placement within school groupings. If a student achieved low scores or no scores, he/she would be labelled as a 'subnormal' and 'uneducable' in the regular classroom (Skidmore, 2002). The term 'uneducability' is not found in contemporary education policy, but its echoes continue to resound in the notion that children, who have learning difficulties, require special educational provision (DFEE, as cited in Skidmore, 2002).

In addition, the terms 'subnormal' and 'uneducable' link to social construction of - 'who is normal or abnormal' because the notion of 'normal' and 'educability' change according to time and place. For example, Nepal has made significant changes in the education of children with disabilities. If concepts change over time and place, these changes show how concepts are socially constructed. When a research participant student, Ram was five years old, his parent enrolled him at the local school. One day his teacher identified his low vision, then, gradually, Ram lost his vision. At the age of six, he completely lost his

vision. He did not go to school then because the school administrator and teachers might think disabled children could not be able to learn with non-disabled peers in the same classroom and so the school did not enrol him. After sometime, his parents knew that disabled children could learn just like other non-disabled students. They, then, enrolled Ram at NHSS. Here, when Ram lost his vision completely at the age of six, school administrators and teachers constructed that Ram was not able to learn. After five years, people gradually understood that a child with vision loss could in fact learn. The concept of who can learn and who cannot learn has changed within a period of 10 years in Nepal, is changed and will change for tomorrow. On the basis of 'normal' or 'subnormal', teachers may decide 'who is educable and who is not'? This suggests that children viewed as 'normal' may possess good intelligence whereas 'subnormal' or 'deviant' children may be viewed as unintelligent.

According to Skidmore's discourse of deviance view of educability, students including those identified as having 'special needs', who score with low or no scores on IQ tests, are identified as 'uneducable' in the regular classroom because they do not have sufficient cognitive ability to learn with non-disabled students.

Lack of cognitive ability

The term cognitive ability relates to the processes the brain undertakes when people interact with the world through activities, such as thinking, reading, remembering, analysing, and evaluating new knowledge. Students' cognitive ability is measured by the standardized IQ test. Nepali schools do not take IQ tests but some schools have an entrance examination to assess students' learning ability before enrolment. However, the majority of public schools in Nepal do not include an entrance examination to assess students' learning ability before enrolment. People have an everyday understanding of learning and ability being related to concepts of intelligence and IQ. If someone has difficulty learning new information, it is likely he/she will be perceived as having a lack of cognitive ability, as opposed to the

teachers' pedagogy or assessment strategies used to assess learning. The role that cognitive ability plays in students' learning was a theme evident in the data.

The majority of the research participants made comments that illustrated their perception of students' lack of cognitive ability. These comments also aligned with aspects of Skidmore's discourse of deviance through the dimension of the educability of students. Teacher participants accepted that they were appointed to teach all students in the school if the school provided them the necessary materials and training. However, many teachers' understanding of their professional responsibility to all students differed at times. This was indicated through evidence from some of the interviews where teachers expressed deficit views at the same time as inclusive views. For example, one teacher did not accept that he had to support developing disabled students' cognitive competency but he recognized a responsibility to teach all learners. He said,

I know I have to teach all students including disabled students...however, it is not my responsibility and job to teach and make all learners competent - including disabled students in the same classroom...

Semi-structured interview on 2nd June, 2015

Some of his thinking was justified based on government policy. He realized that his responsibility was to teach all his students but he did not realize that he had to teach disabled students with non-disabled students in the same classroom. He argued that there is a special policy provision for children with disabilities in the special education policy (GoN, 1996). He stated,

If the government recognised that special needs children could learn better in the special school rather than the regular school...because children with disabilities do not have similar learning competence in comparison to non-disabled students... I guess it is not my responsibility to teach children with disabilities...

Semi-structured interview on 2nd June, 2015

Although this teacher originally stated that he taught all students, he viewed that disabled students did not have the same cognitive ability as other so-called able-bodied students and that government policies suggested a separate curriculum was appropriate.

Another example of teachers' perception of students' cognitive ability is evident in the following comment received from a participant resource teacher of special needs children. He comments,

I find, Rupa, is still not able to write the basic things in the braille script, such as the alphabet. I guess Rupa is genetically unintelligent...

Semi-structured interview on 4th June, 2015

This teacher connected Rupa's learning ability with her parents' genes, which links to British psychologist, Burt's 'hereditarian' view of intelligence: someone's ability is linked to hereditary (Skidmore, 2002). This participant resource teacher also perceived students with disabilities (e.g. Rupa) who were slow learners in comparison to non-disabled students. He states:

I teach disabled students braille script in the resource classroom. I find some visually impaired students are slow learners. For example, Rupa, (student with visual impairment) who studies in class four, has repeated the class three times.

Semi-structured interview on 4th June, 2015

This participant resource teacher's comment reflects his perception that Rupa was 'not teachable' and that she should be labelled as 'not being intelligent or educable'. This comment may signal teacher's perception that Rupa's (and other children's) educability is bounded by inherent limitations and a fixed cognitive ability (Skidmore, 1998). This participant teacher thought the root cause lay within Rupa, not in the teaching strategies or school environment. One possible interpretation of this is that something was wrong with Rupa, and he would apply this perception to other disabled students.

Interestingly, this finding is similar to Singal's (2008) whose qualitative study aimed to understand the perceptions, practices and experiences of school heads, teachers and other staff members working in inclusive schools in Delhi, India, a neighbouring country to Nepal. She found that Indian teachers' beliefs are also influenced by perceptions that the disabled students are 'unteachable' due to IQ differences.

Comments received from the participant teachers reflect some of the challenges Nepal faces if it is to develop classrooms and schools where all children are welcomed and recognised as ‘learners’. The participant teachers stated that they welcomed all children, but there were a variety of understandings about what this meant. Participant teachers’ thinking in deficit ways identified the root cause of learning as being within the students themselves. Their views suggest that they might not reflect on their own expectations of professional responsibility for supporting progress.

5.3.2 Explanation of educational failure

Skidmore (2002) clarifies three ways in which educational failure was explained in British schools. The first was as a consequence of a student’s lack of ability and as an ‘individual deficit’ rather than a result of the school environment or barriers within schools. Similarly, if a student achieves a good score in a test, teachers may label the student as ‘normal’. If students obtain a low score or no score in the test paper, teachers may categorise them as “less intelligent” or “subnormal” (Skidmore, 2002, p. 121). The second explanation for educational failure was related to students’ home background. The third explanation for the cause of educational failure was Cultural Deprivation theory (CDT), which claims that the middleclass children easily access cultural capital, such as education, compared to children from working class backgrounds who experience difficulty accessing cultural capital. As a result, CDT legitimizes the current institutional organisations of schools and internal hierarchies within schools that divide students into groups: good or high achievers versus bad or low achievers (Skidmore, 2002).

In contrast with Skidmore’s observations of British schools, I identified perceived causes of educational failure of students in Nepali schools. These were: a student’s lack of ability (similar to Skidmore’s idea and discussed in the earlier section), socio-cultural traditions and a lack of disabled-friendly infrastructure. Comments received from some

participant teachers about their understanding of educational failure confirmed these themes.

One teacher stated,

I think the main causes for slow learners are students' individual learning ability, community traditions, lack of furniture, school buildings and books in school and their own interest towards study...

Semi-structured interview on 4th June, 2015

These comments reveal that the perceived causes of student failure are not because of the teachers' attitudes and their teaching strategies. The causes are viewed as influences outside the teacher's control.

Failure due to students' learning problems

The main explanation of the participants for educational failures lay with students who are categorized as 'slow learners' or who have a 'learning problem'. On the basis of the students' problems, the participant teachers report the need for remedial teaching to address disabled students' learning problems. This kind of explanation of educational failure reflects the medical discourse of disability (Fulcher, 1989) and Skidmore's discourse of deviance in line with special school practices. This idea is supported by a participant school administrator from NHSS, Ramkaji. He said:

...special needs children including disabled students, learn in the resource classroom at NHSS because they have learning problems in the regular classroom with non-disabled students...

Semi-structured interview on 15th June, 2015

Ramkaji's comments reveal that disabled students have learning issues in regular classrooms. Therefore, NHSS provides special teaching for special needs students in the resource classroom.

Failure due to socio-cultural traditions

As described in Chapters 1 and 4, socio-cultural views have significant influences on disability (e.g. Karma theory). The socio-cultural influence of the community is one explanation about educational failure. The NHSS, administrator, Ramkaji, defined a cause for

making separate classrooms for disabled students after pressure from non-disabled students' parents. He identified,

...parent pressure for not mixing their non-disabled children with disabled students in the regular classroom...

Semi-structured interview on 15th June, 2015

Ramkaji's comment indicated that non-disabled students' parents had an issue about mixing disabled students with their daughter/son in the classroom. A possible interpretation of this is that participant parents may believe in the Karma discourse of disability (see Chapter 4). Parents might not want their children to mix with disabled students due to social prestige. Parents might think that if their children sat and learned alongside disabled children, other people might compare their children's learning competence with the disabled students' learning competence. This links to Valle and Connor's argument, "we can legislate policy but we cannot legislate attitude" (Valle & Connor, 2011, p.41). There is no guaranteed policy changes that will result in changes in parents', school administrators', teachers' and non-teaching staff's attitudes and beliefs towards disability.

Failure due to lack of infrastructure

Lack of a disabled-friendly infrastructure was a cause of education failure revealed in this study. Participant teachers thought that lack of infrastructure had an adverse effect on students' learning. For instance, as seen in the quotation in section 5.3.2 (Explanation of educational failure), a lack of infrastructure and resources was identified as a contributing factor in educational failure. Field notes of this study showed that school did not have accessible buildings and playgrounds for their special needs children, including disabled students. Classrooms lacked disabled-friendly desks, benches and spaces. Similarly, I observed that schools did not have a range of books in their libraries or teaching materials for classroom teaching. For example, NHSS had a computer laboratory, a library with limited books and a science laboratory for non-disabled students (NHSS, 2015). The teaching

materials were the same textbook for all students. The lack of infrastructure and resources was identified by the participants and through the researcher's observations. This aspect of educational failure in Nepal is different from Skidmore's explanation of educational failure as identified in Britain.

5.3.3 School responses

After identifying causes of educational failure, schools provide remedial teaching to support learning for students perceived as having special learning needs (Skidmore, 2002). The concept of remedial teaching is based on the clinical model of medicine. If some students did not perform well or had a low or no score in the test, students might have some deficiency or problem with their cognition. A student's problem might be corrected by a course of treatment, such as a remedial teaching through a special curriculum in a separate classroom (Skidmore, 2002). The idea of remedial teaching was developed from western countries to teach students with learning difficulties in mainstream classroom between the 1950s and 1970s.

In spite of rejecting Skidmore's (2002) discourse of deviance of the school's response in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) policy of both schools, KHSS and NHSS, day-to-day practices of both schools reflect Skidmore's discourse of deviance. Before considering the SIP, the next section first describes both school contexts.

School environment: "Tamasomaa Jyotiramaya"

NHSS has adopted the motto of "*Tamasomaa Jyotiramaya*" as Sanskrit word that literally means "leading out of the darkness into the light". This means that 'leading out of ignorance to enlightenment'. To achieve this goal of education, there are four committees supporting NHSS. The School Management Committee (SMC), the Teacher-Parent Association (PTA), the Namuna Support Committee (NSC) and the Advisory Committee provide the necessary support for NHSS. The NSC communicates school activities with the community and raises

funds from the community for further development of school. Similarly, KHSS has a SMC, a PTA and an Advisory Committee. In addition, both, schools received support from different non-governmental organisations to build the school infrastructure, the library, gave teachers' professional development training and provided scholarships for needy students. Both, schools have their own rules and regulations about: students' attendance; the school dress-code; discipline in the classroom; rules for borrowing books from the library and examination rules. These rules do not discriminate against students on the basis of their physical status, caste, religion, language and so on. Apart from this, NHSS and KHSS develop a yearly School Improvement Plan (SIP), which reveals the overall improvement plans including the school's working culture, in line with a rights-based approach to education through inclusive practice (KHSS, 2015; NHSS, 2015). The next section presents the school improvement plan.

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) refers to an overall action plan of the school in this study. The main objectives of the SIP are to involve local people: parents; teachers; social activists; and other stakeholders in finding out any existing educational problems and provide a way to solve these problems through the SIP in schools. The Department of Education defines objectives of SIP (as cited in CERID, 2003),

SIP places emphasis on school-community links and participatory approaches to facilitate them, involvement of members of the community in decision-making process, promoting and encouraging schools to look at planning as a tool to provide locally based solutions, developing better teaching-learning conditions in schools, gradual devolution of authority and freedom of control over resources by school and community itself ... (CERID, 2003, p.5).

These policy guidelines indicate that local people such as parents, local social activists, teachers are involved in designing the overall action plan of school: providing effective teaching; sufficient teaching resource; infrastructure; and teachers. A possible interpretation of this is that the SIP has given power to the School Management Committee (SMC) to

control every activity of the school. Schools have to prepare the SIP and have to send it to the District Education Office (DEO) annually. A possible reason of this may be donor conditionality and the impact of a neoliberal approach to education because donor organisations need a report of accountability for their investment in Nepal (see Chapter 4).

In the SIP of both schools, the policy mentioned that all students, including disabled students, are welcomed and that the school used inclusive child-friendly teaching strategies. In addition, both schools highlighted, in the same SIPs, that there were some problems in implementing, such as, a rights-based approach to education for all students. For instance, they identified among the major problems: a lack of an accessible buildings infrastructure for all students; a lack of teaching materials; crowded classrooms; financial constraints; curriculum constraints; a lack of professionally trained teachers in inclusive education and assessment systems. This data signals that the schools may not have implemented full inclusive practices due to the lack of infrastructure, resources and trained teachers, even though they stated their aspirations in their SIPs.

A similar contradiction is evident in the narratives of the two participant school administrators and also many of the participant teachers about remedial teaching. Even though the SIPs endorsed inclusive practice, the school administrators and teachers preferred to have separate teaching for special needs children including disabled students. The next section explores extra remedial teaching for disabled students.

Extra remedial teaching for disabled students

Extra remedial teaching denotes giving additional teaching for special needs children including disabled students in a separate classroom as in this study. Some research participants, including one school administrator in this study, referred to remedial teaching for disabled students. For instance, the school administrator of NHSS, Ramkaji, said that the

NHSS focused on remedial teaching for special needs children, including disabled students.

He states:

NHSS provides both a remedial teaching and integrated teaching for children with disabilities in the separate resource classroom by a resource teacher...

Semi-structured interview on 15th June, 2015

Ramkaji's comments indicated that the NHSS followed both remedial teaching and integrated teaching methods. In remedial teaching, a resource teacher taught disabled students in the resource classroom, whereas, in integrated teaching, disabled students were mixed with non-disabled students in the regular classroom. This has two possible interpretations. The first possible interpretation of this is that Ramkaji thought students with disabilities could learn better if they were provided remedial teaching for disabled students in the resource classroom by a special teacher. The second possible interpretation of this is that Ramkaji thought disabled students were assimilated with non-disabled students in the regular classroom after mastery of some prerequisite skills for the regular classroom in the resource classroom. Ramkaji's quote signalled a mixed or dual message for teachers which may confuse them in understanding and following in their day-to-day practice. Sometimes, he told teachers to teach all students in the same classroom and sometimes he told teachers to separate disabled students from the regular classroom and teach them in separate classroom. This reflects that the remedial teaching was an elastic concept that covered a wide range of arrangements (Skidmore, 2002) to meet prerequisites of the regular curriculum. As a result, weak students could get intensive coaching from a specialist teacher in the basic skills, until they mastered the prerequisite level of ability in these skills. According the SIP, the NHSS supported a rights-based approach to education in its policy texts. However, according to Ramkaji, in day-to-day practice, this school provided both remedial and integrated teaching to support special needs students, including disabled students.

Another participant teacher said that an extra remedial teaching is good for disabled students. He shared his experience:

I have been teaching mathematics in this school since 2008. It is really problematic for me to teach mathematics for students with visual impairments. I share my problems with the school principal as well. The school principal suggests me to give an extra remedial teaching for students with visual impairments in a separate classroom.

Semi-structured interview on 11th June, 2015

These comments reflect that this teacher had a problem in teaching mathematics to students with visual impairments in the classroom. It showed that the school's principal thoughts were guided by a deficit teaching model for special learning needs students. This teacher further states:

After having feedback from school principal, I design a separate teaching content and give remedial coaching classes in the resource classroom for students with visual impairments for three months. I take an exam at the end of three months; students with visual impairments perform better in comparison to regular classroom...

Semi-structured interview on 11th June, 2015

This teacher's comments showed that he followed his principal's suggestions to teach students with visual impairments. The teacher commented that he focused on some specific portions of the curriculum, which were exam-oriented. His comments revealed that his students appeared to be unable to acquire the basic skills in mathematics through participation in the regular classroom and that the disabled students performed better in mathematics in a separate exam-oriented class. However, there is a problem if the school principal encouraged teachers to teach all students with special needs in separate classrooms because children with disabilities may learn from only a 'narrow view of the curriculum: a functional curriculum' (Paugh & Dudely-Marling, 2011). This alternative or reduced curriculum for students with disabilities means that they miss out on learning from the regular curriculum with their non-disabled friends. Another problem is that questions are asked from the main curriculum when evaluating students' performance in the school's achievement test at the end of the year. If disabled students do not learn from the regular curriculum, how will

they answer questions in the examination (an important aspect of the Nepali context)? The next section discusses the theory of teaching expertise.

5.3.4 Theory of teaching expertise

For the fourth dimension, Skidmore suggests that a discourse of deviance identifies expertise in teaching using specialist subject knowledge. In other words, the theory of teaching the expertise of discourse of deviance recognises a disabled student needs an expert teacher who has specialist subject knowledge to teach disabled students. This section explores how research participants define the theory of teaching and what kinds of teaching and learning strategies they use while teaching in their day-to-day classrooms.

As explained in Chapter 4, several education policies defined that children must be at the centre of the teaching and learning processes (GoN, 2005, 2010, 2017). According to the *National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF)*, teachers have to use child-centred teaching and learning strategies in the classroom. For instance,

Appropriate teaching learning strategies based on the principle of child-centred, activity- and issue-oriented teaching learning. Practical work, project work, field study and types of assignments will be stated (GoN, 2005, p. 37)

This policy guideline highlights that teaching and learning strategies must be based on child-centred teaching techniques, such as practical work, project work, field study and collaborative learning strategies.

However, data received from participant teachers' classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, field notes and focus-group interviews reflected that many of the participant teachers used teacher-centred or traditional teaching and learning strategies in their classroom teaching rather than child-centred techniques. The majority of the participant teachers used techniques that excluded students or made it difficult for disabled students to participate in classroom activities. One aspect of teaching that requires attention in Nepal is the common, dominant belief in 'rote' learning. This can be recognized in the concept of 'No

Ratta (rote) - No learning'. Participant students and teachers in this study were observed to use this term often as they described learning. The next section explores No *Ratta* - No Learning.

No Ratta - No learning

The term '*Ratta*' is a Nepali word that means rote learning where a teacher transmits information and students receive it. In '*Ratta*' little is expected from students other than to be able to recall the information passed to them by their teachers. *Ratta* supports the idea that 'what' is being learned is more important than 'why' something is being learned. In other words, students are compelled to learn without comprehending the text or concept. The teacher dominates classroom activities rather than facilitating students in their learning. Student success is measured by their ability to remember facts. This *Ratta* type of learning can be linked to Skidmore's discourse of deviance through the dimension of theory of teaching expertise. The majority of research participants used traditional teaching pedagogy in the classroom. For example, one of the observations recorded:

There are fifty-five students out of 65 attending the class six. The teacher is teaching *Science and Environment subject* (Curriculum Development Centre [CDC], 2013d), Chapter three: Simple Machine. She enters into the classroom. Students stand up and greet her. She tells them to sit down. She says to the students to open the book Chapter three from page number 15. She reads the text and explains line by line. During her reading, she frequently says "Do you understand?" Students respond to her, "YES, Miss!" After that she asks students to read silently for ten minutes. After ten minutes, she calls Bijaya to come front and read the text loudly.

Researcher: (asks two students: Bijaya and Gita), "Do you understand, Chapter 3: simple machines?"

Gita and Bijaya: "Naie/No."

Researcher: "Why do you not tell your science Miss about it?"

Gita and Bijaya: We are afraid about her. She is so strict. If we ask her about it and her answer for our question is "No Ratta- No learning".

Researcher: What does "No Ratta-No Learning" mean?

Gita and Bijaya: It means we have to learn it by rote learning.

Non-participant observation, f/n, on 10th June, 2015

This observational record and the students' comments suggest that this teacher thought that teaching meant students had to follow teachers' instructions and respond to questions posed by the teacher. Her instructions seemed to be an 'expert' instruction and she did not offer any group work and project work in the classroom. It seemed that this teacher was more active

and at the centre of learning rather than the students. The students' comments might show that they were also afraid to ask a question of this teacher even if they did not understand the lesson. Gita and Bijaya reported to me (after the class) that if they complained about their teachers' teaching to the school principal, the school principal did not believe them. They shared one more incident with me. They complained about their mathematics teacher's teaching to the school principal last year. As a consequence, both, Gita and Bijaya got punished by the mathematics teacher the following day. They did not want to complain again to the school principal about whether they understood the lesson or not. This illustrated that learning meant rote and teaching meant just imparting knowledge from the textbook. This links to Smith and Barr's (2008) view of curriculum and learning. When the "curriculum is viewed as fact, then learning = being taught" (p. 408). An influence in this way of working may be the teacher's own experience of the *Gurukul* education system which was explained in Chapter 1.

"Social constructionism argues that the ways in which we commonly understand the world, the categories and concepts we use, are historically and culturally specific" (Burr, 2015, p. 4). At the beginning of this thesis in Chapter 1, I reflected about my personal and professional experiences that motivated me to conduct this study in Nepal. My personal experiences and classroom observational data from this study support the idea that teaching practices are influenced by dominant practices such as rote learning and the *Gurukul* education system. The majority of the participant teachers may revert to using the same methods in which they were taught in their school years. They constructed and thought that the best teaching and learning method is only rote learning because their understanding of teaching and learning might be co-constructed by the *Gurukul* education system. This is supported by another participant teacher who taught social studies in grade six (CDC, 2013e). One observation records:

A teacher is teaching “Respect to the Diversification” in the grade six. He enters into the classroom. Students stand up and greet him. He writes the title of the lesson on the board. And he describes the lesson in detail. After that he talks about some of the meanings of the difficult words. He did not use any teaching materials except ‘Chalk and Talk’. Then he finishes the lesson by telling students to read the text and answers the question number one from page number 23 of their book as a classwork. He does not talk any further about the work. The students sit at their desks and work on their own. Some students are observed copying the answers from their friends.

Non-Participant observation, f/n, on 11th June, 2015

In this classroom observation, the teacher might present himself as an active manager rather than a facilitator of the classroom. He neither explained the title before teaching orally, nor provided opportunities for students to guess it before starting the lesson. He told students to open the book and he talked a lot himself rather than providing more opportunities for students to share their ideas in the classroom. He read the lesson and described the difficult word meanings. He did not use any teaching material which might have made the class more lively and interactive. Then, he told students to do exercise from page number 23 as classwork. He did not even evaluate whether the students understood the lesson or not at the end of the lesson. I noticed some students were busy doing their homework rather than paying attention to the teacher’s teaching and the lesson. These observational comments reflect characteristics similar to Skidmore’s discourse of deviance where teachers are ‘experts’ who deliver information and students are passive receivers rather than active and constructive learners.

Another example of rote learning was evident in class six when a participant teacher was working on the subject ‘*Profession, Business and Technology Education*’: *Unit Two: ‘Employment, Training and Education*’ (CDC, 2013c).

The teacher went to the class and took attendance and asked students to open the book of page number 12 of their Profession, Business and Technology Education subject. He asked the first girl of the class to read the lesson. After that he asked them to read silently and underline difficult words. One student asks him, “What does B.E. in construction mean sir?” He says it denotes the Bachelor of Engineering in construction.” Do you understand, now? Yes, sir! Another student asks after five minutes ‘What does Engineering mean, sir?’ I already say about it. Where is your mind? Do you concentrate your mind in the classroom or not? He scolds him. Other students are looking him and he seems to be very nervous... At the last he says, “Write the answer of all questions from page number 13 of your book as homework.

Non-Participant observation, f/n, on 7th June, 2015

In this classroom observation, the participant teacher offered an opportunity for the first girl in the class to read the lesson. This girl then read the lesson and the teacher told them to read silently and underline the difficult words in the text, but he did not use any teaching aids such as pictures, to explain these words' meaning more explicitly in the classroom. One student asked him the meaning of engineering. Instead of making him understand, this teacher scolded him by blaming him for not pay attention to him while he was teaching in the classroom. This may reflect that this student had a 'learning problem'. It appeared not to be the teacher's job to clarify for the student what he/she taught them in the classroom. This indicates a traditional model of teaching because this teacher did not offer an opportunity for students to discuss in groups in the classroom when students had problems. It seemed that this teacher thought he knew everything like an 'expert'. It could be that this teacher might think students were only receivers of knowledge from the book rather than to share their points of view, or any experiences they might have that could help them make sense of this learning. Students might be afraid to ask him a question about the content they did not understand because the teacher would scold them like a criminal. In this classroom, the teacher was the specialist who has more knowledge and authority than the students. This reflects a discourse of deviance of theory of teaching expertise because the teacher constructed learning as fixed similar to expert knowledge.

Within this study, some of the participant teachers did not consider it was their responsibility to teach all students, including disabled students in the classroom due to a lack of resources. As a result, students were expected to follow rote learning by repeating the information. These findings are also similar to Singal (2008). She noted that "teachers did not assume the learning and participation of children with disabilities as their responsibilities in the classroom teaching" in Delhi, India (p. 1526). Teachers conveyed knowledge from the textbook and students were passive receivers of the teacher's interpretation of the textbook

with no questioning and discussion. This idea links to the *Gurukul* education system where students are just passive receivers of knowledge from a teacher/Guru. Many of the participant teachers may be bringing this idea into the classroom unconsciously (i.e., teaching means just recite, transmit and rote learning rather than facilitating students for learning). Rao, Cheng and Narain (2003), and Singal (2008) found a similar perception from Indian teachers and special educators. Teachers are regarded as transmitters of knowledge by giving an emphasis to the completion of a rigid curriculum. During the interview, some participant teachers told me that they did not get training in inclusive education practices.

Lack of teachers' professional development training

The majority of the participant teachers told me that they had positive attitudes about the inclusive education principles but they argued that they did not receive sufficient professional development training in inclusive pedagogy. The majority of teachers were also not sure how to teach disabled students in a regular classroom. However, one participant teacher from NHSS participated in one week's training in special education:

I do not have in teacher professional development training in inclusive education. However, I got one week of training in special education at the district education office three years ago.

Semi-structured interview on 22th June, 2015

This teacher's comments reveal that teachers have limited professional development in inclusive education. I found that the majority of teachers' preparation was brief and incomplete during my class observations. Although this is not the main feature of this research project, it suggests that teachers' limited professional development training in inclusive education is one barrier in implementing inclusive practices in Nepal.

5.3.5 Assessment model

The purpose of assessment is to improve student learning and development (Palomba & Banta, 1999). According to the *National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF)* assessment is a key element of a quality teaching and learning process that is "an episode in

the learning process; part of reflection and autobiographical understanding of progress” (GoN, 2005, p. 49). The *NCF* further explains that the curriculum underpins the assessment which assesses students’ acquired goals of learning rather than judging students. As a result, it recommends a comprehensive assessment policy that has Continuous Assessment System (CAS) and Liberal Promotion Policy (LPP) in the primary level education. The *NCF* states,

A comprehensive assessment policy: formative, summative, Continuous Assessment System (CAS) and Liberal Promotion Policy (LPP) from grade 1- 5, subject teachers use classroom assessment techniques for course improvement, rather than assigning grades. The principle of positive discrimination in assessment for students with disability, there will be separate provision for students with disability rules in the examination for example, students with visual impairment will be given 50% more time in the examination...(GoN, 2005, p.31-32)

The guidelines of this assessment policy reflect that teachers have to use classroom assessment strategies about course improvement for future use rather than students’ grade assessments. The *NCF* recommends a formative evaluation system through homework, unit tests, trimester tests, observations, class work, attendance and participation in the classroom. The *NCF* suggests a positive discrimination assessment policy for disabled students by giving extra time in the examinations. In addition, the LPP is introduced from grades 1 to 5. These guidelines of assessment link to Skidmore’s (2002) discourse of inclusion that focuses on the active participation of all learners in the learning processes: pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. Students and teachers are co-constructing new knowledge by participating in the teaching and learning process. Skidmore’s discourse of inclusion is based on Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory of learning (1978) - learning is an interaction between teachers and students. This Vygotskian influence can also be seen in the Nepali assessment guidelines.

The *NCF* suggests that one way of supporting inclusive child-friendly practice is to use the CAS in Nepal. The CAS records student progress and knowledge in a variety of ways rather than traditional examinations. However, comments received from some participant teachers reflected that they were not yet familiar with the CAS. A possible interpretation of

this is that assessment policy guidelines were not translated into practice in Nepal. One research participant shared his experience:

I have to finish text book on time and I have to prepare my students for terminal and final examinations as well. If my students do not score good marks in my subject in the examinations, the head sir questioned me why students did not score or failed in my subject... As I told you before, it was very difficult job me to teach mathematics for visual impaired students... therefore I gave disabled students important questions list for examination and prepared them on that...

Semi-structured interview on 21st June, 2015

This teacher's comments showed his teaching was based on textbooks and he prepared and gave a list of important questions for disabled students for the examination because he was not able to teach mathematics to visually impaired students in the class. But, the school principal inquired about his teaching performance if students scored low marks or failed in the examination in his subjects. As a result, he thought it might be a good idea for him to prepare students on particular questions in the examination and make sure disabled students passed the examination. This participant teacher used assessment as a tool for testing student knowledge. One possible interpretation of this is that this teacher thought teaching meant testing students' knowledge through a 'diagnostic test' and to pass students on that test. This may signal that the participant teachers are shaped, and have been shaped for a long time with the traditional approach that assessment is summative. Similar to this, the *NCF* reported that teachers used assessments "generally for only grading purposes of students" (GoN, 2005, p. 29) in Nepal. Singal (2008) found similar findings in Indian schools. Teaching tends to be "text book or curriculum oriented and examination had driven, with pressure on achievement of good test results" (Singal, 2008, p. 1526). The next section explains about a separate test paper for disabled students.

A separate test paper

Some participant teachers in this research project thought that there should be a separate test paper for children with disabilities because they thought that disabled children were passive

and incompetent learners in comparison to non-disabled children. For example, one participant teacher commented:

There are 55 students in my class. There are two terminal and final examinations in one academic year...examination communicates that students' learning whether they had achieved or not the objectives of the curriculum...45 out of 55 students scored good marks in my subject, but students with disabilities scored below pass mark in every examinations... I know they are very weak, passive and incompetent students in the class... I think school has to make a separate test paper for them...

Semi-structured interview on 21st June, 2015

This teacher comments reflect that more than 80 per cent of students scored good marks in his subject but disabled students were not even able to score a pass mark in the examination. This teacher perceived that disabled students could not perform better in comparison to non-disabled students because disabled students were weak students, who did not have sufficient competence in mathematics. It seems that this teacher may be labelling disabled students through a 'deficit view' and offered a narrow alternative test paper for disabled students. As a consequence, he recommended a separate test paper and a separate assessment model for disabled students. This view reflects a deficit model for disabled students in assessment, largely influenced by pressure from the ministry of education and the school administration rather than by a student-centred need. The next section discusses the curriculum model.

5.3.6 Curriculum model

This section explores how educational policy guidelines, research participants' perceptions and classroom practices define the curriculum for all students including disabled students. The curriculum is defined as an overall road map of the teaching and learning processes (Taba & Spalding, 1962). This suggests that the curriculum explains the specific objectives of learning content for achieving those learning objectives, instructional strategies to achieve specific learning objectives and specific evaluation strategies to measure those learning objectives (Thapaliya, Parajuli & Bhatta, 2014). The curriculum focuses on what is to be taught, how and when, an emphasis on what is actually to be learned by each student (GoN, 2005). The *National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF)* recommended a

common curriculum: an inclusive curriculum, for all students regardless of their caste, gender, ethnicity, religion, physical status, colour and socio-cultural traditions. The inclusive curriculum would seem to ensure students' identities, languages, cultures, life skills and values in education.

However, the participant school administrators and many of the participating teachers did not find relevance in the *NCF*, a curriculum for students with disabilities in this study. Thus, they recommend an alternative curriculum for disabled students.

An alternative curriculum

As mentioned above, the participant teachers' perceptions and experiences constructed disabled students through the deficit lens as 'incapable' and 'passive' learners. As a result they thought disabled students learned better using an alternative curriculum. One participant teacher shared her experiences:

I have been following the same textbook that is based on curriculum for all students in my class...but I find ... it is a little bit problematic for students with disabilities to achieve the learning goals of curriculum from the existing curriculum and school structures.... students with disabilities do not have pre-requisite knowledge to read this text... last year, there were three students with disabilities in my class and they scored very low scores in two terminal and final examinations... I guess students with disabilities need a separate curriculum that must be based on their specific life skill needs ... students with disabilities do not achieve these objectives from the same curriculum, I think...

Semi-structured interview on 22nd June, 2015

According to this participant teacher, disabled students were not able to learn from the same textbook/curriculum as non-disabled students because they may not have the pre-requisite knowledge to understand the lessons. Three disabled students scored very low marks for her subject in examinations, last year. Based on the disabled students' last year performance, this teacher constructed her perception that disabled students needed a separate curriculum based on their specific life skills needs, such as a functional curriculum (Gabel, 2017). This may revert to "a narrow improvised curriculum which exposed disabled students to a repetitive diet of mechanical exercises" (Skidmore, 2002, p. 123). In addition, a separate curriculum may create restrictions for disabled students participating as full-time students in the regular

curriculum and classroom. Another impact of the separate curriculum is that teachers may categorise students into groups on the basis of their performance. A possible consequence of this is that teachers may give more priority to high achieving students rather than low achievers, such as disabled students in the classroom. I noticed during the classroom teaching observation that some participant teachers gave higher achieving students priority. For example, the first boy or first girl was observed interacting more with the teacher compared to low achieving students.

Another example of a separate curriculum is evident in the participant teachers' narratives. Two participant teachers thought of a special curriculum as being appropriate for disabled students.

One participant teacher did not find the Nepali curriculum as suitable for or as relevant to disabled students. He stated:

I do not think the current curriculum or textbook is appropriate to teach children with disabilities because textbook is based on all students' cognitive ability. In my experience, disabled students do not have sufficient cognitive ability to comprehend current curriculum and textbooks... How I can teach geometric in Mathematics... and laboratory in science for students with visual impairment?

Semi-structured interview on 21st June, 2015

Another participant teacher had a similar belief. He shared his experience:

I have been teaching in this school since 2010. I taught many students. I think children with disabilities have low learning competence. As a result, students with disabilities need a separate curriculum because the existing curriculum may not be able to incorporate their needs....

Semi-structured interview on 21st April, 2015

These teacher comments reflected that disabled students were not able to learn better through same curriculum in regular classrooms due to their low learning competence. They recommend students with disabilities have 'a separate curriculum'. These assumptions have two possible interpretations. The first possible interpretation of this is that these teachers thought that disabled students did not have a basic learning competence. The second possible interpretation of this is that teachers believed that they did not have specific skills to teach

disabled students. As a consequence, these teachers might recommend a separate curriculum, such as, a functional curriculum (Gabel, 2017), for disabled students which relates to Skidmore's view on the special curriculum. The special curriculum refers to "an alternative curriculum or a less academically demanding curriculum for less able students" (Skidmore, 1998, p. 7).

The way education is generally organised in Nepal may also have an impact on how participants understood their roles as educators and their special needs students. The *NCF* revised edition, in 2007, presents the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in level-wise, such as, primary school (levels 1-8) and secondary school (levels 9-12). The *NFC* provides a primary level (1- 8 grades) framework for the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment through six learning areas (subject-wise content), including languages (mother language, Nepali and English), mathematics, arts (Creative and Expressive), science (General science, Environmental Education, Health and Physical Education), social studies and local need based study (Vocational study). The curriculum is based on level-based content learning objectives. Scholars in education argue that a level-wise curriculum, subject-based teaching timetables and the assessment system support teachers to only be responsible for teaching their subject (Millar & Morton, 2007; Morton & McMenamin, 2011; Skidmore, 2002). Teachers are seen as experts in a subject area, but are not responsible for the overall progress of all their students. Indeed, in Nepal, teachers at all levels (including primary school) usually teach just one subject, which impacts on how teachers teach and assess their students. A student who fails in their classroom programme or final examination returns to the same class level in the following year. A failing student may be recognised as needing a 'separate remedial curriculum', particularly if they are identified as not making progress over a couple of years in the same classroom. There are two term examinations and a final examination in schools that evaluate students' performance. If a student cannot demonstrate competence in

these examinations, teachers may construct them as “non-learners” or unable to work within the Nepali curriculum.

5.4 Summary

This chapter demonstrated how the beliefs, construct and understandings of the participant school administrators’ and participant teachers’ influence teaching practices and the learning experience for all students, including disabled students, in two higher secondary schools in Nepal. Data were analysed on the basis of the pedagogical discourse of deviance (Skidmore, 2002). Classroom teaching practices and research participants’ narratives were analysed and interpreted through six key themes: educability of students, explanation of educational failure, school response, the theory of teaching expertise, and the assessment and curriculum models. The research participants constructed learning and teaching in various ways. However, the majority of the research participants constructed students with disabilities through deficit thinking, advocating a separate pedagogy, assessment and curriculum model. Table 5.2 presents key ideas with examples that have come from these discussions in this chapter.

Table 5.2: Summary of key ideas in the chapter

Key ideas	Examples evident in this study
Educability of students Lack of cognitive ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research participants perceive that students with disabilities are not teachable because children with disabilities do not have similar learning competence in comparison to non-disabled student. • Disabled students are slow learners.
Explanation of education failure Personal problem, socio-cultural and lack of infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled students fail in examination due to individual student learning problem rather than teachers' teaching strategies. • Non-disabled students' parents request school principal not to mix their son/daughter with disabled students in the classroom. • There are lack of resources, infrastructure and trained teachers.
School response School Improvement Plan (SIP) Extra remedial teaching for disabled students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School mentioned that school welcomed all students in the SIP. • School provides an extra remedial teaching for students with visual impairments in a resource classroom or separate classroom.
Theory of teaching expertise: No <i>Ratta</i> -No learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and learning activities focused on teacher-centred teaching activities and rote learning, such as lecture method. Teachers rarely used teaching materials in the classroom. Teaching from a textbook without considering the teaching material is highly used in the classroom. • Teachers used derogatory language to scold students for not getting ideas straight away or for asking for help.
Assessment model A separate test paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled students need a separate test paper and a separate assessment model.
Curriculum model An alternative curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled students need a separate curriculum model.

The next chapter explores how teachers resisted the traditional way of teaching and learning practices. The chapter draws on an alternative model of teaching and learning (Smith & Barr, 2008).

Chapter 6: Moving towards inclusive child-friendly school culture

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 presented the exclusionary education policies provision and Chapter 5 discussed traditional teaching practices for all students in Nepal, including disabled students. Contradictory and confusing educational policies, a lack of teaching resources, a lack of a disabled-friendly infrastructure, a lack of trained teachers, traditional teaching and learning approaches, and socio-cultural traditions, were identified as barriers to implementing inclusionary practices in two public higher secondary schools in Nepal. However, some of the research participants resisted the dominant ways of identifying, responding and behaving towards disabled students as ‘learners’ within, and without, the school premises in this study, as they used inclusive child-centred teaching strategies. This signals how some participant teachers can frame their practices to meet the goals of an inclusive child-friendly school culture by replacing the deficit mind set of the teacher towards disabled children.

This chapter explores how some participant teachers resisted and responded to traditional models of teaching and learning practices by offering inclusionary teaching practices for all students, including disabled students, in two higher secondary schools in Nepal. The chapter addresses these research questions:

- How do school administrators, teachers and students with disabilities resist the traditional way of teaching by offering inclusive practices?
- What are the factors that support the development of inclusion in the school?

Data were taken from classroom teaching practices and the lived experiences of the research participants. Seven key themes were identified and the data were analysed relating to these themes. This chapter argues that some research participants’ beliefs and experiences constructed and celebrated a difference, or a disability, as a strength by using inclusive child-centred teaching strategies in their day-to-day teaching and learning practices. Using

inclusionary teaching practices may help Nepali schools and communities build towards a transformed democracy and an inclusive society. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key themes.

6.2 Conceptual framework

Smith and Barr (2008) argued that respect for democratic norms and values can be established through classrooms and school practices and how these might help in developing an egalitarian and anti-discriminatory society. They explored how Northern Ireland was moving towards educational inclusion. They proposed six key principles in a transforming framework for participatory inclusive practices: Develop a sense of community and creative interdependence; empower citizens for democracy; develop a connective pedagogy; negotiate borderlands and develop cultural fluency; support learning; and network with parents/carers and their communities. Smith and Barr (2008) demonstrated that school staff used these principles to improve Northern Ireland schools by changing traditional teaching practices into more inclusionary practices through an inclusive participatory practice framework. They describe the nature of teaching, learning, the curriculum, and the roles of teachers and students in an inclusive classroom. They explain alternative models of traditional teaching, such as “curriculum as activity” and “curriculum as inquiry” (p. 408). Both alternative models of traditional teaching are based on the sociocultural theory of learning. If the focus of teaching is on the constructed knowledge of the individual learner, the curriculum is known as an activity. In contrast, curriculum as enquiry is when the focus of teaching is on the co-construction of new knowledge between teacher and student through equal participation and interaction in a learning community.

Smith and Barr’s (2008) analysis indicated an important issue in working towards more transformative inclusive practices, such as interpreting individual learners’ actions through human relationships rather than a deficit view. They believe that promoting

educational inclusion is possible through an inclusive school culture because students and teachers can learn from each other by sharing their experiences in an inclusive child-friendly school. Alternative models of teaching and learning set a vision of equity, diversity, and provide the foundations for the best learning for all students, that may lead them towards achieving more inclusionary practices in schools and communities. The six principles mentioned above emphasize replacing the traditional views of teaching, learning and curriculum into creating knowledge as part of doing things with others. Smith and Barr's (2008) participatory framework of inclusive practices may support reduction and removal of participant teachers' dominant deficit beliefs towards disabled children in this study.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) examined teachers' craft knowledge of their practices of 'inclusion' in terms of what actions they took and why, in Scottish primary schools. Their research findings recommended that an inclusive pedagogy created learning opportunities for all learners. They argued that teachers needed to focus on what and how aspects of teaching rather than who was to learn it.

Smith and Barr (2008), and Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) provide some possible ways in which social constructionism of teaching and learning can support inclusive child-friendly school cultures in Nepal. They showed that social constructionism does not take anything for granted knowledge because it constructs new knowledge through interactions between teachers and students. Drawing on the ideas of Smith and Barr, and Florian and Black-Hawkins the analysis and findings of this chapter are based on the following themes and sub-themes:

- A sense of belonging
 - Relationship and partnership
- Empower students for democracy
 - *Ghoda Chadne Manchhe Laad Chha*

- Equal opportunity for all students
- Inclusive pedagogy
 - Student-centred teaching strategy
 - Critical thinking strategy
- Teacher's beliefs, knowledge and understanding of learners
 - Diversity, difference or disability as strength: No one is perfect
- Network
 - Teaching and learning is two-way processes
- Supported learning
- School culture

6.2.1 A sense of belonging

A sense of belonging supports a good relationship among the school, parents and students, who believe that a learning community helps students to enhance their learning competency in this study (Berryman & Macfarlane, 2011; Black-Hawkins, 2010; Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Slee, 2011). If students are respected and belong to the school community, it was more likely the school will achieve better results. Students and teachers enjoy working collaboratively, which can help to prompt educational inclusion where learning is viewed as co-constructing new knowledge with each other (Smith & Barr, 2008). A possible interpretation of this is that developing a sense of belonging between students and teachers builds strong connections in the teaching and learning process. Positive relationships increase social inclusion, belonging and harmony (Gabel, 2017; MacArthur, 2013). Relationships and partnerships were identified as a sub-theme within a sense of belonging in this study.

Relationship and partnership

In this study, relationship and partnership refer to active engagement and collaboration among teachers, parents and students (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006) to improve teaching

and learning practices. Some participant teachers had positive attitudes towards disabled students and their learning competencies. If teachers have a positive relationship with, and view of students, students will be actively involved in constructing new knowledge inside the classroom teaching and learning processes and outside the classroom during extra-curricular activities (Robertson, Chamberlain & Kasari, 2003). Some participant teachers focused on students' strong points rather than their weak points. For instance, participant student Bikram, shared his experience in the following ways:

Raju sir took us on an educational excursion to the local monastery, *Namo Buddha (Monastery)* after teaching Unit 3. On the way he showed us how to respect others' rights and duties. He said we had to follow the monastery rules before entering into the temple. After Raju sir's instruction, we assembled in the monastery premises. Ram (a student with visual impairment) asked Raju sir, "I am not allowed to go inside the monastery in our village because I am a *Dalit*, am I allowed to go inside the monastery, sir?" Raju sir says, "Of course! You can go inside the monastery and worship God. God does not restrict any human being to enter the temple and worship. But human beings made rules about who can worship and who cannot. You can go and worship God." Raju sir further explained, "We have to take care and keeping them clean are the common duties and responsibilities of all." He divided us into five groups and he gave each group a different topic for project work. Ram, Jeevan, Sunita, Kanta and I were in our group. We chose Ram (a student with visual impairment) as a group leader. Our project work entitled "prepare a news article including your experiences while participating in the public activities".

Focus-group interview on 22nd June, 2015

In these comments, Bikram's teacher, Raju, took students for an educational trip to a local monastery. Raju told them what to do and what not to do at the monastery on the way there. Then, he divided the students into five groups for project work. This shows that learning can be facilitated through group work, collaboration and participation. During project work, students talk in groups while preparing a news article about their experience of the educational trip. They are able to share their ideas in the group before sharing their project work in the class. Everyone's ideas are respected, valued and welcomed in the group, and they have opportunities to learn for themselves rather than relying on their teacher for answers. Every student, including disabled students, constructed new knowledge through engagement in the classroom by rejecting the deficit lens. Social construction of learning can challenge the traditional teaching approaches by providing more child-centred strategies, such as group work and cooperative learning activities. This is supported by Gita (a disabled

student). She found teachers were caring, welcoming, supportive, encouraging and helpful.

Gita comments:

Teachers treat me like a student without disability. Therefore, I feel more comfortable in school because the school principal, teachers, and non-teaching staff try to understand and help me if I need any help... good behaviours are welcomed and rewarded by teachers...

Semi-structured interview on 6th April, 2015

Gita identifies some participant teachers as seeing her as a student without disabilities, whereas some participant teachers view her disability as a problem (see Chapter 5). This is a powerful observation because Gita notices that the attention of teachers has a powerful effect on how she perceives her learning. Ballard (2012) argues that a teacher is a powerful agent to bring hope and change within school and society. I noticed that some participant teachers identified Gita's disability as a strength whereas some teachers labelled Gita's disability as a 'problem' within same school culture. In this example, some teachers constructed 'Gita's disability' through a dominant construction whereas some teachers interpreted her 'disability' through positive construction. This links to a mixed construction of disability. If the participant teachers construct disability as a strength, it will support belonging and inclusion. If participant teachers recognise disability as a problem, it will hinder belonging and inclusion.

Black-Hawkins (2010) highlights the importance of the partnership with parents in the curriculum as that helps to increase a sense of belonging of parents for inclusive and child-friendly school culture. Within this research project, some participant parents thought that they were valued as members of school communities. One participant parent from NHSS shared his experience as follows:

School sent me an invitation letter while designing the School Improvement Plan (SIP). I attended the meeting and gave my feedback. I thought that NHSS valued parents' suggestions.

Focus-group interview on 24th June, 2015

This participant parent's comment shows that the school invited him to discuss with the SIP in a school meeting. Involving parents in meetings may be good for understanding what

parents want to change in the school and their children's behaviour through the curriculum, in particular. Inviting parents to a school meeting helps to build positive relationships between parents and the school.

Inclusive education makes community members, parents, teachers and students responsible for the development of the school. The school environment and teachers' and students' attitudinal behaviours determine whether all students have a sense of belonging to each other within the school or not (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Creating positive relationship among parents, teachers and students helps to develop a sense of belonging. If students and teachers have a good relationship, it will facilitate collaboration, participation and belonging in learning.

6.2.2 Empower students for democracy

Practising democratic values within schools is a major component in preparing for democratic citizenship in the 21st century (Peterson as cited in Smith and Barr, 2008). Decision-making processes of democratic citizenship occur at three levels: among school staff, among parents/carers and the local community, and among children and educators in the school. This suggests that a sense of shared decision-making processes among all stakeholders: teachers and students, of learning community is an integral part of establishing inclusive teaching-learning processes in the school. When everyone's ideas are respected and welcomed in the classroom, students may have more opportunities to learn by themselves rather than relying on the teacher (Smith & Barr, 2008). Based on empowering students for democracy, two sub-themes emerged: 1) *Ghoda Chadne Manche Laad Chha*; and 2) equal opportunity for all students in this study.

Ghoda Chadne Manche Laad Chha/Learning by trial and error

'Learning by trial and error' is an English translation of the Nepali proverb '*Ghoda Chadne Manche Laad Chha*' that means to focus on your work or problem until you get solutions to it

because learning is full of trial and error, as shown in this study. If students want to find solutions to their problems themselves, teachers need to provide as many opportunities as they can for students to find solutions in the classroom. One participant student, Ambika's teacher encourages her by allowing more times and resources for her find solutions to her problems. She shared her experience in the focus-group interview. She stated that:

My teachers always encourages me to do better even when I make mistake... they say – (*Ghoda Chadne Manche Laad Chha*)- leaning is a process of trial and error... my science teacher encourages me to find out the solution of problems by experimenting - a simple machine of science...if I cannot find it...they encourage me to discuss in the group... how amazing my teachers are...

Focus-group interview on 22nd April, 2015

Ambika's comments reveal that her teacher encouraged her to find solutions to her problems, individually at first. If she cannot find the solutions to her problem, she may discuss her problem in the group. The important thing to notice here is that Ambika is responsible for herself to find solutions to her problems. Her teacher commented: '*Ghoda Chadne Manche Laad Chha*'. Her teacher's comment encourages her to learn by herself and not to worry if she does not get the right solution at the first attempt. As a result of her teachers' attitudes, she may try different strategies and ways to find solutions to her problems herself. This indicates Ambika did not rely on her teacher's instructions and tried very hard to find a solution to her problem. Ambika's teacher role is a facilitator who provides Ambika more opportunities for learning. This reflects a co-constructivist view of learning because Ambika's teacher encourages her to find solutions herself rather than imposing his knowledge on her.

In addition, students can also develop persistence and resilience skills by using kinds of simple machine problems in science-oriented exercises in the classroom. Students choose the problem, manage time, solve the problem, manage the dialogues, manage the group work and try to keep on task. Problem-solving activities can help students to develop decision-making skills, leadership, persistence and resilience, which are essential to empower students

for democratic norms. Students can learn how to make decisions, raise their voices against discrimination and develop tolerance skills in difficult situations. Within the present research project, empowering research participants for democratic values can help to develop inclusive child-friendly school culture by removing deficit thinking, speaking, acting and practising. Democratic values can provide equal opportunities for all students in their learning. The next section explains equal opportunities for all students.

Equal opportunity for all students

Equal opportunity refers to providing equal learning opportunities for all students, including disabled students (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). In this study, participant school administrators and some of the participant teachers felt that they gave equal opportunities and supported participation in teaching and learning processes for all students, including students with disabilities. Participant school administrator, Ramkaji, from NHSS shared his belief and experience in the semi-structured interview. Ramkaji states that:

We are not teaching only the text book, but we are teaching our kids how to behave, respect people politely by creating different situations... our kids are not discriminating against any children with disabilities ... we teach how to respect others', human feelings... students are doing very well... students actively engage in the community work as a volunteer... students also got red cross training and scout training ... I guess, we try our best to maximise equality, justice and democracy in our school...

Semi-structured interview on 15th June, 2015

Ramkaji comments reflect that a school provides more than just academic work. A possible interpretation of this is that a school is a mini-society where students have to prepare what they will need in the future. His comments, “actively engage in the community work” suggest that his school not only gives theoretical knowledge but also takes students into the real world to undertake community work through engagement and group work. Two possible interpretations of this can be evident. First, it indicates the school’s responsibility to take care of the local community; secondly, it empowers students in democratic norms and values. When students are working in the community, they are likely to develop how to behave and give value for others in society. As a result, students develop a sense of responsibility,

belonging and community engagement by the provision of equal opportunities for all in the school. This signals that imparting knowledge of democratic values, moral values; tolerance, humanity, social justice and civic responsibility, such as through Red Cross and Scout training, may empower students to respect each other by helping them in an emergency, such as an earthquake.

While I was conducting my observation in NHSS, students were practising how to cast votes in a pretend election. There was an election programme in the school. I asked a student what was going on. He answered “*Chunab*”/election. I asked him further what *Chunab* meant. He said *Chunab* meant to cast a vote. I inquired with the teachers about this. The social studies teacher said that there was a chapter on elections in the textbook. He thought it would be better to invite all students to participate in the election process. He first talked to the other teachers and then students in Classes 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 students. They then agreed to organise the pretend election programme for students in the school. This description has shown that the pretend election practices in the school can help students how to respect others’ voice, social justices, respect, equality and diversity in the future. Managing and organising a pretend election may be an effective exercise for empowering students in democratic norms and values.

The participant teachers thought that engaging everyone in the learning process was a very effective teaching activity because this activity was based on the principles of democracy. Pitamber (a high school social studies teacher), adopted the definition of democracy articulated by the late American president, Abraham Lincoln. Pitamber said that it is an election of the students, by the students, and for the students (Schwartz, 2000). Pitamber’s statement may mean that students should get opportunities to experiment with things they learn in the classroom. In the above case, students learned about elections from the textbook. The students were then involved in practical work through an ‘election’

themselves. Good relationships, equal opportunities, co-operation and communication among teachers and students can support an inclusive child-friendly school culture. The next section focuses on inclusive pedagogy.

6.2.3 Inclusive pedagogy

Inclusive pedagogy mixes the principles of Smith and Barr (2008) “develop a connective pedagogy” (p.410) and Florian and Black-Hawkins’s (2011) idea of “shifting the focus from one that is concerned with only those individuals who have been identified as having ‘additional needs’ to the learning of all children in the community of the classroom” (p. 818). This suggests that the inclusive pedagogy in this study is based on child-centred teaching strategies where all learners, including marginalised children and disabled students, can learn in the same regular classroom. Connective pedagogy is not only about teaching strategies, it combines individual student’s needs, teaching materials, school infrastructure and social values for learning (Corbett, 2001). In other words, connective pedagogy supports collaborative and active learning for all students by challenging taken-for-granted ways of thinking by providing possible actions for educational inclusion within a socio-cultural context (Black-Hawkins, 2012; Smith & Barr, 2008). The traditional way of teaching and learning activities is based on listening to a lecture from a teacher, answering questions from a textbook, answering teachers' questions and taking notes (Smith & Barr, 2008; Thapaliya, 2012; Thapaliya, Parajuli & Bhatta, 2014). Talking with other students, class discussions, demonstrations, practical work, group work strategies, active learning, collaborative learning, learner responsibilities and meta-learning, were suggested as the most effective classroom activities in the connective pedagogy (Corbett, 2001; Corbett & Norwich, 1999; Hughes, 1997; Smith & Barr, 2008). Connective pedagogy is similar to the ‘inclusive pedagogy’ of Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), and the student-centred strategies and critical thinking

strategies. On the basis of inclusive pedagogy theme, two sub-themes emerged from this study: 1) student-centred teaching strategy; and 2) critical thinking strategy.

Student-centred teaching strategy

A student-centred teaching strategy involves to keep students at the centre of teaching and learning by using a wide range of teaching techniques, such as cooperative learning, group learning, project work and role plays (Mitchell, 2014; Thapaliya, Parajuli & Bhatta, 2014). Student-centred strategies were evident in several policy documents and participant teachers' narratives in the current research project. For example, the *National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF)* (GoN, 2005) states:

Children develop and learn at different rates in different ways. While their style and pace of learning might be intrinsic to them... (p. 28)

This policy text reveals that every learner can learn at their own speed by adopting a variety of strategies and learning at different rates and in different ways. The teacher needs to identify individual learners' talents and facilitate different teaching and learning strategies to encourage the abilities of all learners. Similarly, *the National Framework of Child-Friendly School for Quality Education* (GoN, 2010) states:

Our need is not only to enrol children in school but also to build the capacity of all schools to provide appropriate education for children according to their wishes (GoN, 2010, p. 6).

Guidelines in this policy clearly mention that schools have to provide education for all students on the basis of their interests. This means that all children when at school have the right to receive quality education according to their desires without any discrimination. The *NCF* and the *National Framework of Child-Friendly Schools for Quality Education* suggest that teachers have to use student-centred teaching and learning strategies to facilitate student learning in the classroom (GoN, 2005, 2007a, 2010). These policy guidelines were implemented by some participant teachers in their classroom teaching in this research project.

Some of the participant teachers believed that student-centred teaching strategies facilitate students' learning. Teachers have to facilitate and encourage learning for all students rather than for only some. They thought that using appropriate teaching strategies arouse interest and support the participation of students in the teaching and learning processes. Participant teachers further explained their thoughts through the use of a Chinese proverb,

Tell me, I'll forget,
Show me, I'll remember
Involve me, I'll understand

Semi-structured interview on 11th June, 2015

The above Chinese proverb's spirit was used by some research participants in this study. For instance, a participant teacher from NHSS states that the teacher's role is to facilitate the students. He thought that using teaching aids and student-centred teaching strategies helped him and his students to better comprehend lessons. When I observed in his class, I found that students were actively engaged and participated in classroom activities. One observation recorded:

After greeting the class, this teacher asks the students to raise their hands if they have a kitchen garden in their house. Most of the students' raise their hands. And he calls out to Gita (a student with visual impairment) who shares her kitchen garden. She explains to the class about her kitchen garden. After that, he asks the class, "please tell me name of vegetables which you grow in your kitchen garden." After that, he gives a mini-lecture about the kitchen garden by showing the different pictures of vegetables for ten minutes. Then, he provides the opportunity for students to ask him questions about the kitchen garden. A couple of students ask him questions about the kitchen garden. He did not answer himself first. He asks if anyone knows the answer to the question. The students have the chance to talk to each other about what they know about kitchen gardens. Then, he divides the class into two groups to do an activity in the classroom. He gives each group five minutes- "to prepare a two- minute talk about the kitchen garden by reading the book". After five minutes, each group's leader shares his group's talk with the classroom."

Non-participant observation, f/n. on 11th June, 2015

In this observation, the teacher motivated students toward the teaching topic by asking an open question about 'a kitchen garden'. It seemed that this teacher kept students at the centre of learning. He used the textbook to frame teaching and learning in meaningful ways because students had opportunities to discuss with their peers. He facilitated and involved students in group work teaching strategy, which provided the students opportunities to get to know each

other in the group as well as develop leadership skills. He used the teaching material, such as pictures of different vegetables. Students were actively involved in the classroom interaction. It seemed that students enjoyed learning from each other through fun. Students had the opportunity to use their knowledge from outside the classroom (their home) to share learning in the classroom. The curriculum in this example is responsive to students' knowledge from home and supports students' learning together.

Another participant teacher thought that a student-centred teaching strategy was helpful to build good relationships with students. Tek, a teacher from NHSS, shared his experience in the semi-structured interview in the following ways:

Last year, there were 55 students enrolled in Class 5. I was unable to remember all the students' names for more than a month. Then I used a, peer introduction technique with the class. A peer had to tell their activities of what they did, yesterday at home. After three months, I was able to remember students' name including students' parents and siblings' names as well.

Semi-structured interview on 22nd April, 2015

This teacher thought that a peer introduction strategy would be helpful to establish good relationships with and between students. This activity is an example of a warm-up technique in inclusive pedagogy. This activity may also help boost students' memory recall. After the class, the researcher inquired about relationship between students telling about last night's activities, developing good communication and relationships in the semi-structured interview.

Researcher: What is the relationship between students telling about last night's activities and developing good communication skills and relationships?

Tek: Of course there is...I believed telling their peers about last night's activities may boost three things. The first one is they try to remember what they did last night at their home. The second, they ask their friends about their activities. The third, they develop good communicative, and relationship skills as well as increased confidence.

Semi-structured interview on 22nd April, 2015

This participant teacher's techniques of teaching can help students "telling by learning in a group". Skidmore (2002) called it a "scaffolding approach" in which the teacher facilitates learners to construct knowledge by themselves (p. 127). The teacher's role is to create the environment where "students operate together to improve knowledge and help each other to

learn through interaction and dialogue” (Smith & Barr, 2008, p. 408). The next section discusses the critical thinking strategy.

Critical thinking strategy

Critical thinking “is a process of actively and skilfully conceptualising, applying and evaluating arguments which does not take anything for granted” (Thapaliya, 2012, p. 95). This suggests that critical thinking strategies encourage students to be more creative, constructive, reflective and analytical. Some of the participant teachers used critical thinking strategies indirectly in their classrooms. I interviewed one participant teacher and the students first. Then his classroom teaching and learning practices were recorded.

I noticed that he used some child-centred and critical thinking strategies in the classroom. He was teaching “Lesson-3, Our School-Our Responsibility” in Grade 6 (CDC, 2013a). He divided his class into five groups. Each group chose a group leader themselves. He instructed each group to clean the playground. Students were very actively involved in the group. After 25 minutes, students finished their group work. They washed their hands and came back to class. The teacher asked students to discuss the following questions in their group for three minutes:

1. “How do you feel, now? 2. What are your responsibilities in the school?

After three minutes, he asked each group leader to share his group’s ideas in the classroom. Then, he asked students to open the book at page 45. He explained “Lesson -3: Our School-Our Responsibility” by using a mini-lecture. At the end of the lesson, he asked an open question in the classroom, “Who are responsible to keep school environment neat and clean? Why?”

Non-participant observation, f/n. on 18th June, 2015

From my observation, students were all engaged and understood the lesson very well. The classroom teaching and learning strategies were based on ‘doing by learning’ in which all students were included in the group work. After their practical activity, the students had time to work together to answer the set questions. This teacher supported them as they worked in their groups. He then asked them a question that linked to the course book as well as the activity itself. These activities link to Smith and Barr’s (2008) connective pedagogy because students and teachers are actively involved in co-constructing new knowledge through dialogue and action. These activities also indirectly reflect alternative pedagogy–critical thinking strategies in which both the teacher and students are engaged in finding solutions to

problems. Using critical thinking strategies in the classroom can support an inclusive child-friendly school culture because students learn new knowledge by experimenting.

Another participant from NHSS found a cooperative group teaching strategy effective in teaching all students, including students with visual impairment in her class. She said,

There are two students with visual impairment in my class. There was a lesson called “*Samagik Sadbhab*” (Social respect) in Unit three of Class six in the Nepali subject (CDC, 2013b).

I observed how this teacher taught that lesson. My field note states:

She wrote: Social, man, society, animal, cultural, religion, and development words on the white board, and she asked students to use these words to write a story or a poem or play or draw a picture using these words in their language within five minutes. After five minutes, she asked two students to share their work with the classroom. Then she asked students to open the book at page 16. She requested students to explain social respect in their words for a minute. After one minute, she asked students to share their ideas with their partner sitting on their left and made a single idea within two minutes. After two minutes, she asked students to share their idea about social respect with the classroom. She read and explained the lesson by using a mini-lecture in the Nepali language. She asked students to choose a pair from their right side. She asked that for each pair, one student read the text and other pair summarised it in his/her words. She told them to read the whole lesson by using Pair-Reading and Pair-Summarizing (PR-PS). At the end of the class, all students were engaged very actively in the classroom activities.

Non-participant observation, f/n. on 18th June, 2015

This teacher used some key words such as ‘social, man, society, animal, cultural, religion, and development’ from the lessons that motivated students towards the teaching lesson. The teacher used ‘Think/Pair/Share, Mini-Lecture, and Pair-Reading and Pair-Summarising (PR & PS)’ strategies, which were useful to understand the lesson for all students, including students with a visual impairment, because everyone had opportunities to learn from their peers. She focused on ‘cooperative learning’ that provided opportunities for all students to participate in the classroom learning. This teacher’s teaching activities reflect connective pedagogy (Smith & Barr, 2008) and exploring inclusive pedagogy (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011) because the teacher focused on student-centred teaching strategies. This teacher facilitates students to construct new knowledge by engaging them in different teaching and learning strategies, such as PR and PS.

Some participant teachers identified the importance of sharing and involving students working together in learning within classrooms as supportive of positive relationships among all students. One of the observations recorded an activity in the classroom where the participant teacher supported this way of working:

The teacher wrote the following words on the white board: Wit, India, landlord, village and house. Then he asked student to compose a story/poem/drama/essay/picture by using these words within three minutes individually. Then he told them to share with the person on their right side for one minute and asked a couple of peers to share their creation with the classroom...

Non-participant observation, f/n. on 15th June, 2015

This participant teacher used a ‘predicting by terms’ technique, which illustrates every student, including students with disabilities, engaged and learned better together. He wrote five words on the whiteboard, which were taken from the lesson he was going to teach in the class. He also spoke these words loudly in the classroom. Students created different things using these words. Some students composed stories. Ram composed a poem using these words in the Nepali language. Students were excited, engaged and motivated to learn together. This teacher believed that every child is ‘teachable’ in the regular classroom. He provided an opportunity for every child to learn with each other. This participant teacher used critical thinking teaching strategies where students were able to learn in collaborative ways. These included Think/Pair/Share (TPS), predicting by terms, guessing games, quick write strategies, cooperative teaching strategies, group work, project work and story-telling strategies where students shared ideas together. These types of activities underpin the idea of students participating in learning in a shared curriculum (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Florian, 2010; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Skidmore, 2002; Smith & Barr, 2008). This shows that some of the participant teachers and students in this research co-constructed new knowledge through inclusive pedagogy by resisting the dominant teaching and learning approaches in Nepali schools. Thus, inclusive pedagogy can support the development of an

inclusive child-friendly school culture in Nepal. The next section describes teachers' beliefs, knowledge and understanding of learners.

6.2.4 Teachers' beliefs, knowledge and understanding of learners

Teacher 'beliefs' denotes their viewpoints, concepts and perceptions of any idea. It also, comprises cognitive, affective and behavioural components (de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Lee & Low, 2013). The teacher's beliefs, knowledge and understanding of learners' theme draws on Florian and Black-Hawkins's (2011) views on "rejecting deterministic beliefs about ability as being fixed and associated idea that the presence of some will hold back the progress of others" (p. 819). This shows that all children will make progress, learn and achieve their learning goals if teaching and learning focuses on what children can do rather than what they cannot do. If teachers' beliefs interpret students' differences negatively, it will affect students' overall learning process, whereas, if the teacher beliefs recognise students' difference as a strength, it will facilitate students' learning processes.

Skidmore (2002) argues that the educability of students neither depends on the notion of a natural rank nor does their intelligence rely on a fixed mental capacity supposed to be inherited at birth. This view of educability supports the recognition of all students as learners, including students with disabilities. Vygotsky (1978) believes that educability is based on an open-ended view of learning, rather than a closed view (i.e., a fixed cognitive ability). Learning can be understood as being constructed and recognised through historical and cultural contexts. Learning is mediated through interactions with people, places and things (Cowie & Carr, 2004; Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011; Skidmore, 2002; Smith & Barr, 2008). The above researchers' works have helped me make sense of how some teachers in this research project understood students' competence and how they responded to it. The

‘Diversity or difference or disability is strength’ sub-theme emerged from teachers’ beliefs about students.

Diversity, difference or disability as strength: No one is perfect

As defined in Chapter 1, diversity denotes every individual difference in terms of physical status, gender, caste and socio-cultural beliefs. In this study, disability means socio-cultural-political restrictions for persons with disabilities. Some participants in this study thought that the teaching and learning process could be supported through viewing students’ differences or disabilities as strengths. They saw that it was their responsibility to provide a positive classroom environment where all students can construct new knowledge with each other. One research participant teacher stated:

I have been teaching at this school since 2010, I have taught different background students, including students from ethnic minorities, students from the *Dalit* community and students with visual impairment... but I always treat them equally... I never treat them in terms of their caste, physical status, and social status and so on... I believe that difference or disability is strength...

Semi-structured interview on 22nd April, 2015

These comments suggest that this participant teacher recognised all students as being able to learn and he had a professional responsibility to ensure all children had access to learning, regardless of the labels they came to school with. This relates to Florian and Black-Hawkins’s (2011) view of learners, “believing that all children will make progress, learn and achieve” (p. 819) because this teacher thought that all students can learn if he focuses on his students’ access to learning. Another participant teacher, Ganga, emphasised the appropriate use of teaching materials to manage diversity in a large classroom. She says:

Our school has sufficient teaching and learning materials. I prepare my teaching materials for every lessons, such as magazine cut outs, phonic charts, alphabet charts, word cards...I thought making and using teaching materials in the classroom might motivate the students towards the lesson... teaching aids are very helpful to teach abstract ideas of sound, temperature, motion, speed... I think using teaching aids in the classroom help me meet individual difference of student. For example, some students may have poor listening capacity and some students may have visual problem. I guess, teaching aids help to understand text better for listening problem learners as well. I got teacher training for how to make teaching materials from REED-Nepal (NGO). I can reuse these materials for next year too.

Semi-structured interview on 24th April, 2015

Ganga's comments links to an exploring inclusive pedagogy (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011) because she has an open-ended view of the educability of students. She has focused on teaching and learning and what students can do through different grouping techniques rather than what they cannot do. She considers ways that her teaching materials can support all students, including different or disabled students, to deliver the Nepali curriculum in a large classroom. She demonstrates a belief that students can learn and that her efforts to make good teaching resources can support their opportunities to access learning. She believed that every student was educable and teachable, regardless of their labels which had already been given to them within their school, community or the wider Nepali society. Ganga's beliefs align with Florian and Black-Hawkins's (2011) exploring inclusive pedagogy, "seeking and trying out new ways of working to support the learning of all children" (p. 819). Ganga provides equal opportunities for all learners on the basis of their needs without separating marginalised groups of students, including disabled students, through child-centred teaching strategies, such as group work because she believes in everyone can learn together. This reflects her belief in diversity as a strength.

Ganga's belief is supported by another participant teacher. He thought that sharing the idea of making low and no-cost materials with his students added advantages to managing the classroom properly. He said;

Before making teaching aids, I plan myself what and how much teaching aids I need for the first term. Then, I will share it to my students. How can we make teaching materials, together? I think listening students' ideas help a lot to make them responsible in the classroom as well as it helps to find out students' needs, too. Sharing ideas with students and listening students' needs help me to manage the classroom.

Semi-structured interview on 21st April, 2015

This participant teacher's comments link to two ways of participation in learning student-student and teacher-student. Comments made by this teacher show a respect for his students and the belief that he learns from them as well. This teacher involved students to make the teaching materials they needed for teaching and learning processes. These perspectives, such

as listening to students' views and making classrooms more interactive, help to promote inclusive classroom practices because everyone is responsible to co-construct teaching and learning processes to be more meaningful and contextual by rejecting deterministic beliefs of teachers about students' ability as being fixed (Black-Hawkins, 2010).

An important consideration here is that participant teacher's beliefs and attitudes about student competency could determine the types of opportunities those students had to access learning through the curriculum (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). This means that for some students, their access to schooling was determined by who they had as a teacher each year. If they had a teacher who believed they could learn, then they may have more learning opportunities than if they had a teacher who did not think they could learn. A possible interpretation of this is that recognising students' competence and educability depends on teachers' beliefs, knowledge and understanding.

Some of the participant teachers believed that teaching and learning is a continuous process that has layers of mistakes. One teacher used the phrase "*No one is perfect from birth.*" He stated:

Teaching and learning is a continuous process: No one is perfect by birth. I always try to recognise and encourage the strengths of the students rather than their weaknesses in my class. I know, the good students may answer question correctly whereas the weak students may commit mistakes in the classroom. I mix the good and weak students into group and pair works. I believe the good student may help the weak ones if he/she needs in case.

Semi-structured interview on 22nd June, 2015

This comment suggests that teaching and learning is a continuous process in that students commit a series of mistakes. This teacher does not worry about students' mistakes but focuses on group work in which he mixes learners based on perceived ability in order for them to support each other. This links to exploring the inclusive pedagogy of Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) because this teacher perceives that mixing students into different group activities may support everyone's learning rather than only a few. The next section discusses supported learning.

6.2.5 Supported learning

In this study, supported learning involves the provision of opportunities for both students and teachers to learn from each other (Smith & Barr, 2008). There are three types of support learning: peer to peer, teacher to teacher and teacher to student. Support learning makes students generative, creative and active learners because they have more opportunities from their teachers in the co-construction model of teaching (Smith & Barr, 2008). In addition, students can be used as a resource by learning from other students in the collaborative teaching and learning processes. Students learning can be enhanced if teachers give more priority to communication and the socio-cultural context. Some participants in this project believed that positive attitudes, the selection of appropriate teaching strategies and a positive learning environment supported both students and teachers. Participant students with and without disabilities also perceived that they had much improved in their study because they received support from their peers and teachers. Participant students got help to draw a map of Nepal from their friends and teachers. For instance, participant student Sumnima, shared her experience. She stated:

I am very weak in social studies and drawing. But, I improve a lot in social studies and drawing due to the caring and welcoming attitudes of my teachers and friends ... Now my favourite subject is social studies... I also learn tricks about drawing skills too. Now, I can draw a map of Nepal independently...

Focus-group interview on 24th April, 2015

Sumnima's comments reflect that she was able to draw a map of Nepal due to her social studies teacher's and her friends' cooperation and support. This is also supported by students with visual impairments, Ram and Gita, who received help from their teachers about how to read, how to write in braille script and how to solve numeracy problems in their classrooms. They felt that they were more motivated to do homework because they received support from their teachers and peers. Gita (student with visual impairment) believed that she improved in science and environment subjects. Gita reported:

I am very weak in science and I get help from my friend in the classroom. I get support from my friend and teachers when I am doing science homework.

Semi-structured interview on 6th April, 2015

Gita's experience is supported by other participant students, Kanchi and Binu. They used to copy their friend's mathematics subject homework in class. With the guidance and support of their friends, they were able to do their mathematics homework themselves. Binu shared her experience:

My teachers help me a lot if I do not understand any problem. They provide me clearer explanations of the problems.

Semi-structured interview on 20th April, 2015

Support was not only important to students but also to the teachers. Hari (a teacher with visual impairment) shared with me during informal conversation that some of his students felt lonely in the classroom. In that situation, he divided the class and mixed students into different groups. He facilitated the class so that students had the opportunity to work together in groups. This meant that students were learning from each other. If they had any particular problem, Hari would explain it to them. He thought that teachers could get support from other teachers within the school if they had any particular issue with teaching. This aligns with Smith and Barr's (2008) view of supported learning from colleagues. The next section explores networking among parents, teachers and students.

6.2.6 Network

A network means effective communication and positive relationships among teachers, parents and students in this study. These factors provide increased and better learning opportunities for students (Smith & Barr, 2008). Active engagement and participation in the teaching and learning process, positive relationships among parents, the school and students, and a supportive school environment, are key elements to developing networking (Smith & Barr, 2008). Smith (1996) suggested that successful learning is based on an interactive relationship between the teacher and student, in which all students learn from each other. Activities such as pair reading, pair-writing, think/pair/share, cooperative learning strategies,

mini-lecture, role-play, simulation, project work, and group work can be helpful in developing a good network between teacher and student. Similarly, Epstein et al., (as cited in Smith & Barr, 2008), suggest six types of involvement for developing school, family and community partnerships: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborations with the community. In this study, the participant teachers, parents and students were engaged in making learning more productive and meaningful for students. The ‘teaching and learning as a two-way process’ sub-theme is emerged from the data.

Teaching and learning as two-way processes

Teaching and learning as a two-way process denotes that the teacher and student co-construct new knowledge from each other. Some of the research participants believed that teaching and learning is a two-way process. For instance, participant teacher Pooja, not only taught students, but she also learned from her students. She commented:

I have a student with visual impairment – Sapana - who was born in to the Rai caste. Sapana cannot speak the Nepali language. At the beginning, I couldn't speak Sapana's mother tongue, the Rai language, nor did Sapana understand my language. But I applied group learning activities in the classroom. I sought the support of a student who understood the Rai language. Uma (a student from the Rai community) helped to convey Sapana's messages to me. After six months, I learned the Rai language. Thus, I am not only teaching students, I am also learning from them...

Semi-structured interview on 10th June, 2015

Comments received from Pooja reflect that she is not only a teacher, she is also a learner. Pooja learned the Rai language from Uma. As a result, she could communicate with Sapana. Pooja comments also indicate ‘curriculum as inquiry’ (Smith & Barr, 2008) because she and her students are co-constructing new knowledge from each other through active, creative, constructive and critical learning processes. This shows that teaching and learning is socially co-constructed between teachers and students through interactions.

In addition, a good network between school and parent was also evident in this study. For instance, one participant parent commented that he was invited to different programmes at the school, such as parent meetings and a school improvement plan meeting. He stated:

The school invited me to parent's day, and a development meeting for the School Improvement Plan (SIP), a staff meeting and other functions such as cultural programmes in the school...I attended these programmes...

Focus-group interview on 24th June, 2015

This participant parent's comments illustrate networking between the school and parents for the further development of the school plan. This links to Smith and Barr's (2008) recommendations about developing a network with parents and the school community with parents being invited to share their skills and expertise in different school activities. The next section explores school culture.

6.2.7 School culture

School culture refers to "mixed of traditions and rituals that have been built up over time as teachers, students, parents and administrators work together and deal with accomplishments" (Schein as cited in Deal & Peterson, 2003, p.4). This suggests that school culture means shared working values, norms, (un)written rules, traditions, and expectations of school administrators, teachers, students and parents. Ainscow (1999) recommends that everyone (principal, teacher, parents and students) works collaboratively to ensure that all members of the school community experience a sense of being welcome, of belonging and of being valued in the school culture (Ainscow, 1999, 2005). In this research project, the theme 'school culture' is based on Booth and Ainscow's (2011) notions of inclusive school culture because the *Index for Inclusion* is based on the critical reflection and discussion about teachers' beliefs, values, teaching and learning practices of students. Teachers develop their rationale for teaching and learning approaches for all learners, including disabled children. The *Index for Inclusion* may be a useful tool to challenge traditional ways of thinking, speaking and acting about teaching practices in Nepali schools. Thus, the school culture

refers to a working action plan that includes learning goals, working values, teaching strategies, responsibilities of school administrators, teachers, students and parents.

As described in Chapter 5, School Management Committee (SMC) members and the school administrator set up school expectations and an effective teaching and learning culture in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) (KHSS, 2015; NHSS, 2015). Both, KHSS and NHSS, SIPs are in line with a mix of rights-based approach to education and neoliberal approach to education through an inclusionary model of teaching. However, school administrators, teachers, parents and students' beliefs and experiences are mixed. The majority of the research participants' practices and experiences supported a pedagogical discourse of deviance as a working school culture (see Chapter 5), whereas some research participants' practices and experiences supported a pedagogical discourse of inclusion (Skidmore, 2002), and inclusive practices, and an inclusive school culture (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

Participant school administrators and teachers were interviewed, the SIP and other supporting documents were analysed to better understand school policies related to school culture. Participant school administrators stated that they were trying to develop a curriculum that was responsive to their communities' needs by providing support to all learners. School principals were committed to enacting the inclusive education policy guidelines for all students by reforming the curriculum in the SIP. However, a barrier to developing and implementing a reformed school curriculum and textbook was the need to follow the national curriculum and textbook. Ramkaji (principal of NHSS) reported:

Our school, NHSS tries to reform curriculum and develop pedagogy across the school... but NHSS cannot reform the curriculum because we have to follow the national curriculum to meet the national goals of education... therefore NHSS tries to provide all facilities for all children...
Semi-structured interview on 15th June, 2015

Ramkaji's comments reflect that he wanted to change the school's culture through the curriculum and teaching and learning activities. But he could not reframe new curriculum due to the rigid national policy guidelines. Ramkaji's comments also reflected a sense of

powerlessness. On the one hand, he wished to reform curriculum and pedagogy in line with an inclusive school culture. On the other hand, he suggested this is not possible if he has to follow national curriculum goals. This may suggest that there is tension between the SIP and the school's day-to-day practices. As a consequence, the principal is working to balance professional responsibilities, community responsibilities and policy responsibilities, all of which have competing demands.

The comments of school administrators reiterate the complexity of educational practices in Nepal. Even with the best intentions the practice of paying attention to all students and their access to education (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011) is problematic because of a lack of resources and teacher training in inclusive practices. However, some of the research participants believed that even with their limited resources, it was possible to teach all students in the same classroom if the school supported teachers. For instance, Hari (a teacher with visual impairment from NHSS) stated:

I think an accessible school infrastructure, a well-ventilated classroom, sufficient teaching and learning resources, positive attitudes of teachers, positive relationships between students and teachers enhance and facilitate an inclusive school culture. I believe that everyone's mind is like a blank sheet of paper...we have to imprint the knowledge, through intuition, interaction, conversations among student, teacher and society through a medium of language.

Semi-structured interview on 15th April, 2015

Hari's thoughts indicate that accessible school buildings, classroom furniture, sufficient teaching aids, and positive cooperation between teachers and students, help to establish inclusive school values and cultures. Hari comments related to Booth and Ainscow's (2011) inclusive school culture because. He did not believe that a child had a certain level of cognitive ability, like intelligence, but found that cognitive ability could be fostered by co-construction among teachers, students and the community.

An inclusive school culture welcomes all students at the school. One participant student, Suntali, reported that teachers respected and welcomed her as a member of

classroom regardless of her labels. Suntali (a student from the *Dalit* community) liked to go to her school because everyone welcomed her:

Everyone welcomes and respects me in the school...teachers are cheerful and happy...
When they meet me in the way to library, they ask me: how are you? Where are you going?

Focus-group interview on 22nd April, 2015

Teaching and non-teaching staff provided value, respect and care for Suntali. She found that teachers were interested in her welfare. They asked her how she was and were interested in what she was doing. This shows that a supportive school culture for students' welfare can develop inclusive practices by minimising or removing deficit practices in schools.

6.3 Summary

This chapter explored how research participants resisted the dominant teaching practices by adopting inclusionary practices in two public higher secondary schools in Nepal. Seven themes: a sense of belonging, empowerment of students for democracy, inclusive pedagogy, teachers' beliefs, knowledge and understanding of learners, supported learning, network, and school culture were identified and discussed. Classroom teaching practices and research participants' experiences identify the underlying ideas that support an inclusive child-friendly school culture for all students rather than only 'some'. The data showed that there may be tensions between policies and practices. However, some participants perceive diversity or difference or disability as strengths. Some participant teachers believe that teaching and learning is a two-way process where teachers and students can learn from each other. Their thinking may help to make sense of how to work within some of the competing tensions between policies and practices through inclusive pedagogy.

The chapter also considered how research participants experienced schooling when school staff and students had positive beliefs about all students as 'learners'. Participants also demonstrated respect for all students as learners and agreed that there were still some existing barriers for students with disabilities in the school. They acknowledged these barriers but

tried to provide as many opportunities as possible for their students. The research participants believed that all learners, including disabled students, might gain more knowledge, as teachers could learn from the disabled students in the classroom. Participant teachers' and students' comments suggested a belief that all children belonged in their local school. The participant students with, and without disabilities felt like they belonged because they were cared for, welcomed, and respected by teachers, non-teaching staff and non-disabled students. Table 6.1 summarises key ideas that have come from these discussions.

Table 6.1: Summary of key themes in the chapter

Key ideas	Examples evident from this study
A sense of belonging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship and partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students feel they belong to the school. Teachers ask the children how they are and if they need support. Children learn from each other regardless of disability or difference. Positive relationships between teachers and students are important.
Empower citizens for democracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ghoda Chadne Manche Laad Chha</i> Equal opportunity for all students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The attitudes of teachers give children permission to make mistakes and to ask questions. Learning from democratic practices such as organising a ‘mini-election’ in school Friendships with peers regardless of disability or difference are important. There is a responsibility to both recognise one’s rights and respect others’ rights.
Inclusive pedagogy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student-centred teaching strategy Critical thinking strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers believe it is their responsibility to teach all students about respect and care. Collaborative, cooperative, critical thinking, active and child-centred teaching and learning strategies are emphasised.
Teachers’ beliefs, knowledge and understanding of learners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity, difference or disability as strength 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding students’ interests and talents is most important. Respecting diversity, democratic norms and values are core to educating students for life. The attitudes of teachers give children permission to make mistakes and to ask questions.
Supported learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get support from their peer and teachers.
Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching and learning as two-way processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students feel that teaching and non-teaching staff respect them. Teachers ask the children how they are and if they need support. Establishing rapport with students is important. Leadership is important in building relationships within a school and its’ community.
School culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child-centred teaching may focus on group and collaboration strategies such as cooperative learning, think/pair/share and peer reading/summarising. Link teaching to the world of the students. Finding students’ interests and talents is most important. Respect for diversity, democratic norms and values are core to educating students for life.

The next chapter discusses the findings of this thesis, and identifies gaps and limitations in the research and suggests implications.

Chapter 7: Discussion and conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore how government officers, school administrators/principals, teachers with and without disabilities, parents, and students with and without disabilities perceive and experience inclusive education policies and practices in Nepal. In this chapter, I illustrate the overall summary of the current research project by considering the summary of key research finding chapters. I also suggest implications of this research.

The government of Nepal has enacted a rights-based approach to education legislation and policies which support human rights, social justice and inclusion. However, exclusionary and discriminatory policies and practices for children with disabilities continue to feature in Nepal. This study explored how and why these exclusionary policies and practices still exist in the education system for disabled children. Specifically, the project aimed to discover why disabled children experience restricted access to teaching and learning activities. Identifying problems can help school administrators, teachers and other stakeholders to reform the School Improvement Plan (SIP) by focusing on inclusive school policy, practice and culture where all learners can learn together. The SIP is designed to meet the needs of all students including disabled students, by changing the school working model and classroom settings into inclusive child-friendly school cultures which emphasise that all children belong to school and can participate and learn.

In this study, I have argued that the experiences of children with disabilities are shaped by taken-for-granted socio-cultural exclusionary practices in Nepal. Restrictions on children with disabilities' full participation in school and socio-cultural activities in local communities are underpinned by unequal socio-cultural or religious discourses. These include Eastern Hindu philosophy and cultural knowledge such as Karma theory and ways that dominate marginalised groups of people, including persons with disabilities. Reforms in

educational policies and practices may bring hope for a change in the lives of disabled people if unequal socio-cultural discourses towards disabled persons are addressed. This thesis focused on making sense of how discourses of disabilities, deficit assumptions and derogatory language underpinned policies and practices influencing children with disabilities' experience of education. Specifically, through discourses of disabilities, it analysed processes of recognising disabilities, deficit religious beliefs and their effects on the education of children with disabilities (see Chapter 4).

Data were analysed and interpreted by contrasting them with discourses of disabilities (Fulcher, 1989), a theoretical model of pedagogical discourse (Skidmore, 2002), and alternative models of teaching-learning (Smith & Barr, 2008). These theories provided a framework which helps to understand the interactions between macro and micro factors influencing socio-cultural constructions of disability and inclusive education in Nepal. The experiences, and perceptions of government officers, school administrators, teachers, parents, and children with and without disabilities, were investigated to find out the effects of disabling discourses on children and the education system.

The study found that the research participants in this project constructed disabled students through four discourses of disabilities: medical, corporate-managerial, religious and rights-based. However, most of the research participants constructed disabled learners through a deficit discourse and applied the traditional teaching and learning strategies as '*No Ratta – No learning*' in their classroom teaching, whereas some research participants resisted the traditional ways of teaching by offering inclusive student-centred teaching strategies. The next section describes the summary of the findings Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

7.2 Summary of the findings chapters

Chapter 4 explores how discourses of disabilities impact on disabled peoples' experiences and opportunities to access learning in schools. This research project found that several

Nepali educational policies are shaped, and have been shaped, by a discourse of deficit. Within and across the educational policies, there were tensions and conflicting interpretations of disability and inclusive education. In some policies, disability was understood as a kind of disease, which could be fixed by expert prescriptions, whereas, in other policies disability was interpreted a cause of social and environmental barriers. Nepali society still interprets disability as a result of bad Karma which directly leads to discrimination, stigmatisation, categorisation and exclusion. In addition, the study found that there were complex resourcing and funding application processes for disabled students. For example, schools did not enrol students with disabilities without first receiving approval for resource funding from the District Education Office (DEO) which, in turn, creates confusion among school administrators. The need for funding applications to support some students' attendance is in contrast with educational policies that state every child has access to education in regular schools. It was also found that several Nepali policies and day-to day practices are based on the idea that disabled children are a burden, weak, helpless, and unproductive.

Chapter 5 explored how the participant school administrators and teachers identified disabled children's learning competency in their day-to-day teaching and learning practices. Six themes were identified and critically examined. The majority of participant teachers suggested that special needs children could have a more positive learning experience when provided with a separate curriculum, pedagogy and assessment model within a special school or 'segregated' classroom. Teachers expressed that disabled students did not have the potential competence to learn with non-disabled students in the regular classroom. As a consequence, they perceived that disabled students are 'uneducable' or 'not teachable' alongside non-disabled students. Some teachers also reported insufficient resources and training in inclusive practices to teach disabled students. The chapter found that the majority of the participant teachers used teacher-centred teaching strategies (e.g. 'No *Ratta* - No

learning) rather than child-centred strategies. Students were, in effect, passive recipients of knowledge from teachers, who had an authoritative role in the classroom rather than as a facilitator.

Chapter 6 explored how some teachers resisted a traditional approach to teaching and learning practices by offering inclusive and child-centred strategies. This chapter showed how some teachers' beliefs, attitudes and practice opposed the traditional way of teaching and learning practices by adopting inclusive pedagogies, which supported the inclusion of all students as 'learners'. Seven themes were identified and analysed: a sense of belonging; empowering students for democracy; inclusive pedagogy; teachers' beliefs, knowledge and understanding of learners; supported learning; network; and school culture. These themes may offer hope for schools and communities building towards a transformed democracy and an inclusive society (Smith & Barr, 2008) in Nepal.

7.3 Findings

This section presents a discussion of the findings of this research project. Tensions and contradictory policies, complex procedural processes for resources and funding, a neo-liberal approach to education, the impact of caste hierarchy and socio-cultural traditions, barriers to inclusionary practices, inadequacy of resources and inaccessible infrastructure, lack of teachers' professional development training in inclusive education, and approaches to teaching and learning processes themes were emerged and discussed.

7.3.1 Tensions and contradictory policies

This study found that Nepal's commitment to 'disability issues' and 'inclusive education' has been maintained in policy rhetoric since the 1990s. The government of Nepal is committed to provide "inclusive education", "child-friendly school", "non-discriminatory education", "multilingualism" and "recognise student's innate talent" in the *National Curriculum Framework for School Education* (Government of Nepal [GoN], 2005, p. 12). This

commitment has been further expressed in the *National of Child-friendly School for Quality Education* (GoN, 2010) and the *Inclusive Education Policy for Children with Disabilities* (GoN, 2017). Recognising disability and inclusive education issues continues through a discourse of deficit (medical) and a discourse of inclusion (rights-based discourse) because of ambiguity or uncertainty about what disability and inclusive education means. For instance, there was consistency in various policy documents about how to recognise disability issues, from 1982 to 2006. A wide range of Nepali policy documents mentioned that a team of professional experts, including medical doctors, were involved in the diagnosis and identification committee of disability in the different levels of disability identification committees in Nepal which links to a medical discourse of disability.

However, after 2006, this research project found that the policy text defines ‘disability issues’ as a social problem rather than an individual problem in line with the rights-based discourse of disability. As a result, Nepali legislation promotes the inclusion for all students at school where every child has the right to receive education in their local school. This indicates that educational policies provided contradictory and unclear messages to government officers, school administrators, school teachers and parents about disability and educational inclusion for disabled children in the regular classroom because there is inconsistency in how to recognise ‘disability issues’ and how to define ‘inclusive education’ in several policy documents in Nepal.

Within this study, the research participants argue that it is very difficult to implement inclusive ways of teaching due to contradictory and confusing policies (see Chapter 4). This is not only a case for a least developed country like Nepal, but it is also an issue of developed countries as well. Researchers in inclusive education argue that ‘disability issues’ and ‘inclusive education’ policy in Western countries such as New Zealand, Britain, America and Australia, are shaped by lack of clarity, coherence and cohesion in policy as a fundamental

barrier to inclusive education (Armstrong, 2003; Ballard, 2004a; Barton, 2004; Barton & Armstrong, 2007; Meyer, 1997; Slee, 2001). Higgins, MacArthur and Rietveld (2006) argue that higgledy-piggledy policy creates confusion in education policies, school structures and pedagogy inconsistencies in New Zealand as these policies might confuse teachers when implementing these policies in practice. They claim teachers' dominant thinking and attitudes might create barriers to disabled students' learning and participation in the regular classroom as teachers consider disabled students as 'special', who do not belong to regular classroom.

The Nepal context is complex in terms of its geographical, political, socio-cultural norms (e.g. Karma theory) and pressure from international donor organisations. Despite these complexities, there are some positive aspects included in policy documents and practices. It is, undoubtedly, difficult to implement full inclusion but there are some people who are putting their best efforts into developing inclusive practices in their classes. These individuals celebrate the diversity, difference and disability: No one is perfect (see Chapter 6). The findings of this research project illustrated that the notions 'disability' and 'inclusion' are associated with 'special education', which is heavily influenced by deficit discourses (see Chapter 4). The next section discusses the complex procedural processes involved in resource and funding applications.

7.3.2 Complex procedural processes for resource funding applications

Nepal enacts a right-based free education policy provision for all children, including marginalised and disabled children, up to higher secondary level in their local school (GoN, 2005; Ministry of Education, 2009). However, this study found that children with disabilities did not have access to neighbourhood schools due to the complex processes needed for resource funding applications for special needs children. As discussed in Chapter 4, three levels of Disability Identification Committees (DICs): Village, District and National were formed to identify an individual's disability. These committees consist of several

professionals, such as doctors, and officers from health, education and welfare sectors. Getting a disability identity card requires a series of journeys from an individual village to the capital city and this creates geographical, transport and financial constraints for disabled children and their parents. Similarly, the school has to complete and submit a resource funding application to the District Education Office (DEO) for approval and the release of funds. Schools will only accept disabled students' enrolment if the resource funding application is approved by the DEO.

This study found that parents were busy collecting the required documents and school administrators were busy writing resource funding applications to the District Education Office (DEO). Without making a difference to disabled students' access to the curriculum, allocating resource fund for them in regular classroom setting does not guarantee the objectives of inclusive education. This is not only a case of the least developed countries, such as Nepal, as it happens in developed countries as well. For instance, Millar and Morton (2007), who analysed the New Zealand special education and curriculum policy, found that New Zealand school administrators focused on preparing resource funding applications based on the existing resource funding criteria. They argued that allocating resources within mainstream settings failed to meet the broader goals of inclusion if attention was focussed on the issue of funding to the detriment of time being spent on curriculum access for disabled students.

Resource funding for students with disabilities helps to increase student enrolments in Nepal, but does not guarantee to what extent this policy contributes to the retention of disabled children in school. Slee (2011) argued that additional resources focused on the assimilation of mainstream education, can lead to the exclusion of disabled students rather than inclusion. A similar situation occurs in Nepal as the government has provided resource funding to assimilate special needs children, including disabled students, in the regular

classroom. However, there is no guarantee that all children, who apply for resource funding, will have it approved because of the competition for the limited resources. Therefore, resource funding criteria for special needs children, including disabled students, is a complex process in Nepal. The next section discusses the neoliberal approach to education.

7.3.3 Neo-liberal approach to education

The present research project found that a neoliberal approach to education significantly influenced education policies and practices in Nepal. Neoliberal policies are based on academic excellence, choice, accountability and competition, whereas the rights-based approach to education is based on inclusion, social justice and equality. As a result, there is a contradiction between the rights-based and neoliberal approach to education. Hill (2010) argues that neo-liberalisation increases social inequality, inhumanity and anti-democratic freedoms as neoliberal policies enhance a loss of equity, social justice, democracy and democratic accountability. The neoliberal approach to education gives priority to privatisation, marketisation, decentralisation, choice, innovation and competition by the national standardised test results (e.g. SLC results). Students are categorised on the basis of their performance in examinations. As a result, there may be no guarantee of access to quality education for all students because school staff may choose only students who scored good marks in examinations. Bhatta (2009) reported similar findings. He described various strategies of the decentralisation policy adopted by the government to improve the quality of education in public schools through transforming school management to local School Management Committee (SMC). He concluded that current decentralisation strategies are unsuccessful in enhancing the pedagogical practices in the classrooms and do not improve the quality of education in Nepal. While Bhatta did not analyse the impact of neoliberal policies specifically for disabled students, his findings may indicate the overall impact of neoliberal policies in schools. The findings of the current research project suggested that Nepali

educational policies were heavily guided by neoliberal influences on education. The next section explains the impact of caste hierarchy and socio-cultural traditions on educating students.

7.3.4 Impact of caste hierarchy and socio-cultural traditions on educating students

This study found that disabled students and disabled teachers were discriminated against on the basis of their caste and physical status (see Chapters 1 and 4). Similarly, Khanal (2015) found that the government of Nepal removed and amended caste-based discrimination from the main Civil Code of Nepal in 1963, yet the consequences of the Civil Code are still prevalent in Nepali society. However, it is difficult to empower people to change their attitudes towards disabled people and lower caste people. For instance, an important factor obstructing education for disabled children was the pervasiveness of Karma theory. People still believe that disability is a consequence of bad Karma generated by past experiences (see Chapter 4). This is supported by RCRD and Save the Children (2014) which reported that disabled children faced social discrimination along with discriminatory practices in both society and school.

The current research project found that the deeply rooted negative socio-cultural beliefs and attitudes towards disabled children had an adverse impact on the education of them in Nepal. This study found various factors (e.g. belief in Karma theory) that influence discrimination and exclusion for disabled children in the Nepali community. More than 80 percent of the population believe and follow the Hindu religion (CBS, 2011). Hindu people believe in Karma theory and reincarnation theory, which can negatively shape people's attitudes towards disabled persons. The Karma theory holds that every person has several lives on the basis of their work (Karma) in a previous life. Within the Nepali community, people not only interpret disability as a result of sinful work or action of the past, but it is also a result of one's moral lapse (K.C., 2016; Lamichhane, 2011).

The majority of Nepali people still perceive children with disabilities as a burden to family and society because they think that disability is a cause of bad Karmic action of the past. Therefore, some disabled persons were excluded from social events (e.g. marriage ceremonies and house warming events, see Chapter 4). Similarly, people connect someone's 'disability' as a matter of social prestige and that is demoralising to those families who have a disabled child. This type of deficit socio-cultural belief is a challenge for educating disabled children in the regular school. These beliefs work against inclusive education principles. In addition, this study found that some research participants were given a dual identity.

Dual identity: Caste and Disability

This study found that the disabled participant students' identities were influenced by their caste and disability. For example, when Ram (the disabled student) was born, he was initially viewed as a normal healthy child. However, his identity was socially constructed and it changed to being a disabled boy when he was around six years old (see 4.2.1). Similar to this, people's identities were constructed by their caste in Nepali society (see 1.4.3). For example, people from the lower Dalit caste are socially constructed as 'impure' compared to people from an upper *Brahmin* caste. This study found that participants, such as Ram (with a disability and from lower caste), were perceived as having dual identities (see 4.2.3). Interestingly, Bhutanese researchers reported similar findings with socio-cultural construction (caste) and Karma theory playing an important role in recognising a person's ability/disability (Kamenopoulou & Dukpa, 2018; Schuelka, 2015). The next section explores barriers to inclusionary practices.

7.3.5 Barriers to inclusionary practices

This research project found that lack of funding, lack of trained teachers, lack of teachers' training in inclusive education, negative attitude of teachers and socio-cultural beliefs towards different or disabled students, were significant barriers to implementing inclusive

practices in the school (see Chapter 5). These findings are supported by several inclusive education scholars, nationally and internationally. Scholars in inclusive education reported that most of the least developed countries in the world lack of capacity to implement inclusive education due to: lack of budgets; lack of trained teachers; inadequate teacher training; a top-down administrative approach; socio-cultural beliefs; and continued reliance on developed countries and international non-governmental organisations' financial support (Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2010; Kalyanpur, 2014; Khanal, 2015a; Mukhopadhyay, 2015; Sharma, Forlin, Marella & Jitoko, 2017). Similarly, Sharma, Loreman and Simi (2017) conducted a study on stakeholders' perspectives about barriers and facilitators of inclusive education in the Solomon Islands. They reported that fear of discrimination; the personal traits of children with disabilities, geography and lack of government support were barriers to implementing inclusive education in the Solomon Islands. Likewise, Sharma, Loreman and Macanawai (2016) pointed out that the negative attitudes of school administrators, staff, students without disabilities, curriculum and pedagogy constraints, a lack of adequate resources in schools and a lack of proper coordination between schools and communities, were barriers to the implementation of inclusive education in Pacific Island countries. Exam-oriented curricula, didactic teaching practices, extensive homework expectations, school eliteness, and attitudes of society were reported as the main source of barriers to implementing inclusive education in Asian countries (Sharma & Das, 2015; Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler & Yang, 2013; UNESCO, 2000, 2008, 2010; UNICEF, 2012). Likewise, Regmi (2017) and UNICEF (2003) found that sociocultural backgrounds, financial constraints, lack of resources, lack of disabled-friendly infrastructure, a lack of teacher professional development training in inclusive education, lack of teachers' commitment and overcrowded classrooms were barriers to implementing inclusive practices in Nepal.

This study found that the participant school administrators and teachers faced the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment as constraints, especially in science and mathematics subjects. Participant disabled students in this study never learned their lessons, including figures and diagrams in science and mathematics, and there were no alternative questions provided in the examination for such lessons either. If students did not learn the required content, they would not be able to attempt the questions in the examination. Hence, disabled students were unsuccessful in achieving high levels of results due to the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment constraints. Some participant teachers thought that disabled students might learn better in special schools where teachers designed a separate pedagogy, assessment and curriculum model on the basis of the special education needs children including disabled students (see Chapter 5). CERID (2006) reported a similar finding and found that teachers thought disabled children could learn better in special schools.

The present study also identified the influence of donor agency conditions on the government of Nepal's adoption of inclusive education. Similarly, Poudel (2007) reported that Nepal has adopted inclusive education due to global pressure (e.g. UN Conventions) and donor funding conditions. As a result, the inclusive education agenda in the many least developed countries is driven by donors and policymakers rather than teachers and schools (Singal, as cited in Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler & Yang, 2013). This study found that the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment constraints, a lack of supportive resources, a lack of accessible infrastructure for disabled students, a lack of teachers' professional development training in inclusive education and large classroom sizes were the major barriers to enacting inclusive and child-friendly teaching strategies in the classroom. The next section presents inadequacy of resources and inaccessible infrastructure.

7.3.6 Inadequacy of resources and inaccessible infrastructure

This study identified that the lack of teaching resources and a lack of disabled-friendly infrastructure were some of the major barriers to implementing inclusive child-centred teaching practices in the classroom. Similar to this, CERID (2006) reported that schools did not have a minimum of the physical facilities required for disabled children in Nepal. Even though in some cases, the participant school administrators and teachers in this study were keen to teach all students, including disabled children, and engage them with different school activities, they argued that the school did not provide them with sufficient teaching and learning materials and teacher training in inclusive practices to enable them to do this. Thus, teachers were forced to follow traditional teaching and learning strategies through rote learning such as ‘No *Ratta* - No Learning’ (see Chapter 5).

The schools participating in the School Improvement Plan reported that they had a computer laboratory, a library with books and a science laboratory for non-disabled students (NHSS, 2015). However, the schools did not have an accessible infrastructure, such as classrooms and playgrounds, nor a completely equipped computer laboratory, a library with a range of books or a science laboratory with access for disabled students. Hence, children with disabilities were isolated and restricted in participating in school learning and extra-curricular activities. In addition, the current study found that classrooms were overcrowded. It appeared difficult to facilitate teaching and learning activities and also manage students in overcrowded classrooms. The situation worsened after the massive earthquake, in 2015, which left school buildings unsafe for use.

7.3.7 Approaches to teaching and learning processes

This research project found that inclusive education was yet to be fully enacted in Nepal. For instance, the government of Nepal has made three school policy provisions: special, integrated and regular/inclusive, to enrol all students, including special needs children and

disabled children. The special school focuses on educating disabled children, mainly children who have intellectual disabilities. This model is similar to Heiman's 'rejection inclusion model' (2004). In special schools, the students were taught in the separate schools through a separate curriculum by specialist teachers. The integrated school is a mainstream school where disabled children can be enrolled and have access to education with their peers. But, special needs children are taken out from the regular classroom for teaching special skills in a resource classroom. There is a provision for a resource room and an additional support system for preparing disabled children for the mainstreaming classes. This model of school is similar to Heiman's (2004) 'pulled in-pulled out inclusion' and Hornby's (2014) 'partial inclusion model' because the inclusive or regular school integrates disabled students along with non-disabled children in the same classroom in Nepal. Similarly, the principles of inclusive education were not truly implemented in schools even when the special needs children and disabled children were present in the regular classrooms. Several researchers have reported similar findings (CERID, 2008; DIRD, 2014; Lindsay, 2003).

7.3.8 Teachers' understanding of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment

The *National Curriculum Framework for School Education* (GoN, 2005) endorsed the rights-based approach to education for all students, including students with disabilities, in the regular school. However, some research participants who had visual impairments experienced that they were restricted in being able to participate in the learning process due to restrictions from the curriculum, resource materials and pedagogy. The majority of the participant teachers within this study neither facilitated disabled students to participate in learning nor did they use child-centred teaching strategies during classroom teaching and learning processes (see Chapter 5). They suggested that the curriculum, school infrastructure and the scarcity of resources restricted disabled students' participation.

Curriculum

This research project found that three types of curricula were enacted in Nepali schools: a prepared curriculum, a written curriculum and an alternative curriculum. The 'prepared curriculum' denotes that schools design and make their own curriculum with regards to local needs based on national goals of education. The prepared curriculum reflects the local socio-cultural traditions of the particular society where it is being taught (GoN, 2005). Teachers' beliefs and socio-cultural assumptions about disability, pedagogy, teaching, assessment, learning and teacher's roles can influence the locally prepared curriculum (Morton, Rietveld, Guerin, McIlroy & Duke, 2012; Smith & Barr, 2008). The second type of curriculum is a written-curriculum. Schools enacted a written curriculum that is prepared and endorsed by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) in Nepal. A written curriculum is based on experts', teachers', parents', students' and representatives from ethnic minorities, *Dalits*, and disabled persons recommendations, suggestions and feedback. However, the written curriculum is mainly prepared on the basis of experts' recommendations, suggestions and feedbacks. Nevertheless, there is 'an alternative curriculum for special needs children', in practice, which is the third type of curriculum. This alternative curriculum is prepared to teach special needs students, including disabled students in Nepal. In the alternative curriculum, alternative strategies, alternative teaching contents and alternative assessment methods are applied to teach individual students. The alternative curriculum is similar to an adaptive curriculum (Van den Berg, Slegers & Geijssel, 2001) or a different curriculum (Westwood, 2003).

Pedagogy

Findings of the current research project demonstrate that the majority of the participant teachers reported an awareness of different child-centred teaching techniques in the semi-structured interviews, but were not observed using them in the classroom. They used

traditional teaching and learning strategies, such as rote-learning and a lecture method, in the classroom. This is supported by Regmi (2017). He found that teachers reflected knowledge of inclusive education in the interview, but they were incapable of implementing inclusive practices in the classroom.

The present study found both negative and positive participations in learning, which were shaped, respectively, by a discourse of deviance and a discourse of inclusion/difference. Participation can be shaped and limited by discourses of deficit and difference (Guerin & Morton, 2015). From a negative perspective, students were restricted in participation. Some subject teachers only focused on non-disabled students (e.g. gave more opportunities for first girl or boy) during classroom teaching and the learning process. This is an example of negative participation in instructional pedagogy that hindered some students, including disabled students' involvement in learning. On the other hand, positive participatory relationships between teachers and students are pivotal in the teaching and learning process (Macartney & Morton, 2013). From a positive aspect, some participant teachers encouraged all students to be involved in the learning process. For example, disabled students' seats were arranged in the front bench in the classroom. As a result, disabled students typically had no difficulty hearing the teachers' voice – unless they experienced a hearing impairment.

The findings also suggest that some participant teachers used different inclusive child-centred teaching strategies (e.g. participatory classroom activities, peer collaboration, group work, project work and inclusive pedagogy) (Corbett & Slee, 2000; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Meyer, 2001; Smith & Barr, 2008) and critical thinking strategies (e.g. group work, role play, project work, peer-reading and peer-summarizing) to teach their students in the classroom (see Chapter 6). Similar to this, Carrington and Elkins (2002) found that whole class instruction, teacher directed small class instruction, one-to-one teacher student

interaction, peer tutors, cooperative learning groups and independent learning help to engage all learners, including disabled students in the classroom.

Assessment

This research project found that the majority of the participant teachers used assessment as a tool for testing students' knowledge (e.g. summative evaluation) to grade them rather than a formative evaluation system (see Chapter 5).

The majority of teachers thought that the rigid curriculum, pedagogy and assessment were too restricted for students with disabilities to participate in learning in the mainstream classroom setting. However, some teachers did not find the same curriculum, pedagogy and assessment as rigid. As a result, some teachers focused on: 'how to teach by using different inclusive child-centred teaching strategies, rather than 'who to teach' (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011) (see Chapter 6).

7.3.9 Teachers' roles

Teachers can play a significant role in transferring the philosophy of inclusive education into inclusive practices (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler & Yang, 2013). This study found that the most teachers had 'expert' roles and imparted new knowledge through rote learning (see Chapter 5). However, some participant teachers had 'facilitator' roles who co-constructed new knowledge through interaction between students and teachers (see Chapter 6).

7.3.10 Lack of Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) training in inclusive education

The findings of this study show that Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) training in inclusive education is another barrier to implementing inclusive practices in the school. Nearly all participant teachers did not have professional development training in inclusive education in this study. Some participant teachers received one week training on TPD from

the District Education Office (DEO). They complained that one week training is not sufficient for them to develop the required professional skills to teach all children including disabled students in the regular classroom setting. Similar to this, Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler and Yang (2013) reviewed the literature from 13 Asian Pacific countries including Nepal. They reported a lack of teachers who had professional development training in implementing inclusive practices in countries, such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Pakistan, Vietnam and Nepal.

7.3.11 School culture

The present research project found that schools had a mixture of both an exclusive and inclusive school culture towards the education of disabled students. The majority of participants of this study thought that the special needs children, including disabled students were not able to learn in the regular classroom. Thus, the school must provide separate extra remedial curriculum, pedagogy and assessment for special needs children, including disabled students (see Chapter 5). In addition, this research project found that there was a gradual improvement seen towards enrolling and educating all students, including disabled students in Nepal. Some of the participant teachers respected and welcomed disabled students as valued 'learners' in the school. They developed a sense of belonging by encouraging students with disabilities to participate in the teaching and learning activities. They put disabled students at the centre of learning and focused on students' interests, rights and strengths rather than their weaknesses (e.g. learning is by trial and error, project work). Building networks and partnerships among teachers, parents and students were essential to teaching all students, including disabled students in the regular classroom (see Chapter 6).

To sum up, the present research project demonstrated that two higher secondary schools had a mixed school culture: exclusive and inclusive. School administrators and the majority of the participant teachers thought that special needs students, including disabled

students could not learn in the regular classroom and they recommended a separate pedagogy, curriculum and assessment for disabled students. However, the participant school administrators and some participant teachers had very positive beliefs towards educating all learners, including disabled learners in the regular classroom, and they thought that every learner was teachable in the regular classroom. They recognised their professional responsibility was to ensure all children had access to learning, regardless of the children's physical status, caste and religion.

7.4 Conclusions

The present research project has examined how participant school administrators, teachers, parents, and students with and without disabilities perceive and experience inclusive education policies and practices in Nepal. The educational policies, practices and lived experiences of participants: government officers, school administrators, teachers; parents, non-disabled and disabled students were discussed and analysed in the regular classroom setting. This study drew the following concluding remarks based on the overall discussion and findings:

- The meaning of disability is socio-political-culturally constructed in Nepal. The majority of the research participants recognised disability through medical-religious discourses of disabilities (i.e., discourse of deficit/disability) and they interpreted disability as a kind of disease that can be cured through the provision of medicine. Some research participants defined disability as the reaction to sinful actions or works in the past.
- Research participants had both positive and negative attitudes towards students with disabilities. If participant teachers, peers, and community celebrated the disability, it would help to facilitate disabled children participating in learning. However, if the participant teachers, peers and society interpreted disability as a burden, being

incapable, unproductive manpower, and stereotypes, it would lead to the creation of restriction for disabled children's participation in learning.

- The existing *National Curriculum Framework for School Education's* (GoN, 2005, 2007a) curriculum, pedagogy and assessment policy aspirations have not been translated into teaching and learning processes in two public higher secondary schools in Nepal. Hence, the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and school culture were not positive to children with disabilities. However, some participant teachers resisted the traditional rote learning strategies by using child-centred teaching techniques and critical thinking strategies, which supported disabled students' learning.
- The current research project found that the government of Nepal had contradictory and conflicting policies. For instance, the government enacted a rights-based approach to education and a neo-liberal approach to education within the same policy. This study found that the neo-liberal approach to education increases inequality and injustice for disabled students.
- The present research project found that there were some barriers to implementing inclusive education in Nepal. For instance, a lack of a disabled-friendly infrastructure, a lack of teaching resources, a lack of trained teachers, a lack of teachers' professional development training in inclusive education, the negative attitudes of the teachers, and socio-cultural beliefs about disabled students were major barriers to implementing inclusive practices in the school. The next section explains the implications of this research.

7.5 Implications of this research

This study suggests the following implications for policy, (curriculum, pedagogy, assessment) school and society (socio-cultural-religious).

7.5.1 Policy

This study found that the government of Nepal enacted a rights-based approach to educational policies in line with the UN conventions *EFA*, *MDGs*, *UNCRPD* and also inclusive education to support disabled persons, but these policies had not fully implemented into local schools' day-to-day practices. There was a gap between policy and practice provisions. Thus, the government of Nepal has to minimise this gap by revising the existing educational policies in line with *UNCRPD* 2006 and constitutional rights (GoN, 2015). The revised educational policy should be communicated, enacted and implemented at every level of administrations, such as national, province, district, village and school.

The current research project found that there were complex disability identity assessment procedures and complex procedural processes for resource funding applications for special needs students and disabled students. Thus, the disability identity assessment procedures need to be amended and made an easy process at the local level. The resource funding application processes also need to be reformed and made an easy at the school level rather than at district and national levels. In addition, the government must increase the resource funding budget to cover disabled students' minimum educational needs. The findings also suggest that several Nepali policy documents constructed difference or disability through a medical discourse of disability. This means that disability is an individual health problem, as a kind of disease that could be cured by giving medicine. The existing policies need to be amended to strongly address fundamental rights, such as education, health and so on of special needs children including different and disabled students. The existing infrastructure and resources are not sufficient nor are these resources disabled-friendly. The government should, therefore, supply sufficient disabled-friendly resources to schools.

7.5.2 Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment

The existing curriculum, pedagogy and assessment system needs to be amended and implemented according to a rights-based approach to education and the principles of inclusive education. This study found that the lack of trained teachers was the main barrier to implementing an inclusive and child-friendly pedagogy in these two public higher secondary schools. The untrained teachers' problems can be solved by giving in-service teacher training and amending the teacher education courses, such as a Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Education, a Bachelor's of Education (B.Ed.) and Master's of Education (M.Ed.).

This research project found that the participant teachers did not receive training in inclusive education. The government of Nepal should provide Teacher Professional Development (TPD) training in inclusive pedagogy and social justice at schools. The inclusive pedagogy training could be conducted at the district level as that can help the teachers to teach students through inclusive child-friendly strategies by respecting and valuing diverse students, including disabled children. Forming district level monitoring committees can be beneficial for teachers who can monitor the teaching and learning processes. The monitoring committee can also provide refresher training of inclusive pedagogy for teachers if needed.

In spite of having the Continuous Assessment System (CAS) and Liberal Promotion Policy (LPP) at the primary level, this thesis found that the participant teachers thought the assessment system was separate from the curriculum and pedagogy systems. In addition, the participant teachers were not familiar with CAS system and LPP. As a result, they categorised students on the basis of merit, which increases inequality and disparity among students. Thus, the existing assessment system needs to be revised in line with inclusive education principles of assessment.

7.5.3 School practices

This study found that research participants had mixed attitudes about different or disabled students' learning competence. Some participant teachers thought that disabled students could not be able to learn with other non-disabled students in regular classroom, whereas some participant teachers thought that disabled students could be able to learn with non-disabled students (see Chapters 5 and 6). As a result, there were tensions between teachers who believed in a traditional teaching discourse and teachers who believed in rights based discourse of teaching and learning. Thus, the teachers' attitudes towards disabled students' learning ability need to be changed in line with a rights-based approach to education: 'everyone can learn if they are provided opportunities'. Teachers need to focus on inclusive pedagogy and student-centred strategies to teach all students, including disabled students in the regular classroom. Teachers should have strong motivation and continuous involvement to transform their traditional teaching approaches to an inclusive teaching approach.

Professional leadership and management development training in inclusive education should be given to school administrators (principals). If school principals have a good knowledge of leadership skill they may navigate schools towards a more inclusive child-friendly school environment. This thesis reported that schools did not have sufficient infrastructure and resources for disabled students. Schools should provide sufficient disabled friendly infrastructure and resources for disabled students.

7.5.4 Socio-cultural practices

Some participants had interpreted disability through Karmic actions of the past (see Chapter 4). People perceived 'disability' due to sinful work in the past, fate and god's curse. The central government, non-governmental organisations and communities should organise awareness programmes regarding disabilities in communities. As a result, non-disabled people can build positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

By law, people must not be categorised in terms of caste hierarchy. However, this dissertation found that there is still caste hierarchy in local practice in Nepali society (see Chapter 1). A scientific and systematic disability identification committee needs to be formed at the local level rather than at district, province and national levels. Teachers and school administrators can play an important role in minimising such disparities. For instance, school principals can organise parents' meetings in the school and discuss such inequalities that help to build a positive relationship among parents, students and teachers. Schools can play a catalyst role to maximise inclusionary and minimise exclusionary practices by communicating and organising frequent meeting among parents, teachers and students. If teachers have respected, welcomed, cared for and valued every student as a learner, it will help to develop a sense of belonging that can help minimise caste based inequalities and disparities. In addition, teachers can include all children including disabled children from different castes, such as children from *Dalit* communities and ethnic minorities' children in group learning and cooperative learning in the classroom.

7.6 Suggestion for future research

There are several areas for further research based on the findings reported in this thesis. These include a need for further research examining the situation and experiences in more schools in many districts to find out how inclusive education policies and practices are enacted. The present study found that there were gaps in implementing inclusive education policies and practices in schools. The findings identified that the medical-religious discourses constructed disability as a form of disease, pity, or sinful work of the past in this small scale doctoral research study. A larger scale study could investigate how school administrators, teachers, parents, and students with and without disabilities understand and perceive children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

Future research could further investigate barriers to implementing inclusive education in schools. Contradictory policies, dominant practices, lack of an accessible infrastructure, a lack of resources, teachers' negative attitudes and beliefs, and so on towards children with disabilities were the main sources of barriers identified in this study. Future research could identify the underlying reasons why teachers believed that children with disabilities were uneducable in the mainstream classroom. Through further research, factors contributing the school environments that provide inclusive child-friendly school culture that fosters a sense of belonging in all students could be identified.

There was a severe earthquake during the data collection of this study. However, participants still demonstrated their willingness to participate in this project when their own lives were disrupted by so many changes which can also be a possible area for future research.

7.7 Lessons learned

This section provides a reflection on what I learned as a researcher from this study, how the initial research project took shape and how I dealt with its complexity throughout the research process.

At the beginning of my project, I proposed to investigate the perspectives and practices of primary level English teachers towards inclusive education using: multiple case studies from five developmental regions of Nepal. After my first supervision meeting on 10th February 2014, my supervisors recommended some literature for further study that helped me to refine the focus of my study. By exploring the literature, I found contradictions between words disability, inclusive policy and practice. For example, I was surprised to know that schools were still denying the enrolment of children with disabilities in Nepal even though the neoliberal government had enacted a rights-based approach to education. Therefore, my focus turned to the inclusive policies and practices for all children, including disabled and

non-disabled students in the regular classroom in two higher secondary schools in Nepal. The study explored how inclusive education policies are implemented by school principals, teachers and students in regular school settings and how teachers perceived and understood curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and disability in particular.

At the start of my research journey, I prepared a comprehensive plan and assumed that if I followed this I would complete the study. However, everything changed as the result of a severe earthquake on 25th April, 2015 (see Chapter 3 and below). Therefore, I reviewed and changed my research design from ethnographic case studies to a qualitative study (see Chapter 3). As a researcher, I learned how to work with the research participants in the complex and difficult situations resulting from this natural disaster. I found it essential to express empathy in order to establish rapport with my research participants in the field (see below and Chapter 3). In addition, I learned how to use data collection tools: interview, observations, and document analysis, which is a skill I look forward to applying in future large scale research.

At the proposal stage, I did not mention that I would use Fulcher's discourse of disability (1989), Skidmore's pedagogical discourse (2002), Smith and Barr's alternatives models of learning-teaching (2008) and Florian and Black-Hawkins's exploring inclusive pedagogy (2011) as a conceptual framework to analyse my data. But, the reference to discourses of disability developed as I began analysing data. Each of these documents provided conceptual frameworks against which I could contrast and analyse my data. These frameworks supported an exploration of the participants' understanding and perspectives of inclusive education policy and practice. Data collected from participants reflected that they had both negative and positive perspectives towards disabled students' learning ability. Overall, the majority of the participant teachers constructed disabled children negatively. However, there were some teachers who celebrated disabled students' strengths rather than

their weaknesses. I also learned that inclusive education could flourish if teachers shifted their pedagogy according to learners' needs rather than attempting to change students on the basis of their teaching strategies.

I believe the findings of this research have the potential to support further development of Nepal's education system. Since 1990, policy makers, school administrators, teachers, teacher educators and parents have worked to transform traditional educational practices into transformative practices for children in Nepali schools. However, fully transformative practice is yet to be implemented in Nepali schools. Transformative practice requires supportive and systematic efforts from all stakeholders to change policies and practices (Thapaliya, Morton & McMenamin, 2016b; Thapaliya, Morton, McMenamin & Guerin, 2017). As a result of this research project, in the context of the two schools, now, I believe that the Ministry of Education is not meeting their responsibilities towards disabled children, their families and educators based on current policies, rights and conventions (GoN, 2005, 2007a, 2010; 2015; United Nations, 2006; UNESCO, 1994). It would not be unreasonable to suggest that a similar situation might be occurring in other schools in other districts in Nepal.

Personal lessons learned

A number of personal lessons were learned during this study. These included development of my academic writing and research skills which included developing the research proposal, and report and thesis writing. The Australian Himalayan Foundation (AHF) provided the opportunity to conduct a study on the situation of disability in Nepal (Thapaliya, 2016a). I had the opportunity to develop my workshop facilitation skills with different participant groups (e.g. policy makers, government officers, teacher educators, teacher trainers, disabled people, parents' of disabled students). I also developed presentation skills when presenting my research findings at several international conferences.

7.8 Final thoughts

This research project focused on inclusive education policies and practices in Nepal. The study specifically explored how inclusive education policies are implemented by government officers, school administrators, teachers and students in the regular school setting and how teachers perceive and understand the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and disability at higher secondary level schools. Data were collected through interviews, observations and document analysis. The research findings have enhanced perspectives and understanding of inclusive education policies and practices for all students, including disabled students. This research project's findings provide possible future implications for policy makers, curriculum designers, government officers, school administrators, teachers, parents, students and other community stakeholders towards improving, managing and providing more inclusive ways of providing education for all students, including disabled students.

This research project was conducted just after the second constitutional assembly elections in Nepal, at a time when the country was drafting a new constitution. At that time, there was a huge expectation among disabled people and other marginalised groups about their inclusion in the community through equitable treatment in all sectors of society. Thus, it may be the right time to begin restructuring the education system, policies and practices in line with the principles of inclusive education and spirit of the new Constitution of Nepal (GoN, 2015). The findings of this research project may provide insights for policy makers for drafting inclusive education policies in the forthcoming provincials' legislation. However, there are some political parties, such as *Madhesi Morcha* that have been agitating against this since September 2015 because they thought that the Constitution of Nepal still does not address the voices of marginalised groups of people in Nepal.

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Glossary: List of Nepali words used in this thesis

Acchut: Impure.

Naie: No.

Ande: A visually impaired person.

Chora: Son.

Chule nimto: Invitation for all family members.

Chunab: An election.

Dalit: Regarded as the lowest or untouchable caste in the Hindu-based caste system.

Dhami: A person who believes in religious traditions and that cures for diseases can be found through religious activities.

Dharti ko Bojah: A burden to the earth.

Ghoda Chadne Manche Laad Chha: A Nepali proverb denoting learning as a process of trial and error.

Janajati: The tribal people of Nepal. They have their own traditional homeland, mother tongue, culture, oral, and written history.

Kalo Masan: A black monster.

Kati bichara: A Nepali word is used to express pity for someone like a very poor boy.

Kamaiya: A system that bonds males to labour and females bonded to household works. If female bonded to household works, it denotes the Kamlari system.

Karma: Action, work or duty.

Kula Deutta: Main god of the house.

Loktantrik Āndolan: The 19-day Democracy Movement which took place in 2006, Nepal. Political parties attempted to overthrow martial law introduced by King Gyanendra on 1 February 2005. Abolishing the Monarchy and holding a Constitution Assembly were other objectives of the movement.

Madhesi Morcha: *Madhesi* refers to people who live in the Terai region of Nepal. A group of Madhesi people, who were united to raise their voices against the new Constitution, is known as the *Madhesi Morcha*.

Maoist (Unified Communist party of Nepal): A political party formed in 1994 by breaking away from the Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Centre). The party launched a civil war in 1996 against the government of Nepal with the objective of abolishing the Monarchy and establishing the country as a People's Republic.

Moksa: Emancipation.

Muluki Ain: A civil code.

Naya: New.

Pani Na Chalne: Untouchable.

Purano: Old.

Ratta: Rote learning.

Tamasomaa Jyotiramaya (Sanskrit word): - Leading out of the darkness into the light.

Terai: Terai is referred to as a plain area which lies at an altitude of 67m to 300m in Nepal.

Vedic: A period of time when Aryans settled in India. Also, *Vedas* refers to the oldest written scriptures of Hinduism.

Abbreviations

AHF	Australian Himalayan Foundation
B.Ed.	Bachelor in Education
BMFA	Biwako Millennium Framework for Action
BPEP	Basic and Primary Education Project
CAS	Continuous Assessment System
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CDT	Cultural Deprivation Theory
CERID	Research Centre for Educational Innovations and Development
CSIE	Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education
CWDs	Children with Disabilities
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DEO	District Education Office
DFID	Department of International Development
DIC	Disability Identification Committee
DIRD	Dynamic Institute of Research and Development
DLDIC	District Level Disability Identification Committee
DoE	Department of Education
DPWR	Disabled Persons Protection and Welfare Rules
DSE	Disability Studies in Education
DWPA	Disabled Welfare and Protection Act
e.g.	For example
EFA	Education for All
ERHEC	Education Research Human Ethics Committee
f/n	Field notes
GAMC	Gramin Adarsha Multiple Campus
GoN	Government of Nepal
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HLNEC	High-Level National Education Committee
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IEPCD	Inclusive Education Policy for Children with Disabilities
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
KHSS	Kamana Higher Secondary School
KMC	Kathmandu Metropolitan City
LPP	Liberal Promotion Policy
M.Ed.	Master in Education
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCED	National Centre for Development Education
NCF	National Curriculum Framework for school education
NEC	National Education Commission
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NESP	National Education System Plan
NFCFS	National Framework of Child-Friendly School for Quality Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHSS	Namuna Higher Secondary School
NLDIC	National Level Disability Identification Committee

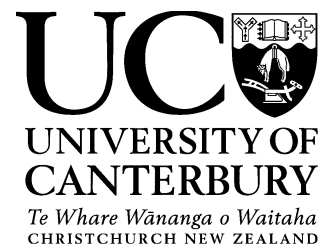
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPPAD	National Policy and Plan of Action on Disability
NSC	Namuna Support Committee
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development
PCL	Proficiency Certificate Level
PTA	Teacher-Parent Association
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
RCRD	Resource Centre for Rehabilitation and Development
REED	Rural Education and Environment Development Centre
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEC	Special Education Council
SEP	Special Education Policy
SER	Special Education Regulations
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMC	School Management Committee
SSRP	School Sector Reform Programme
SWDs	Students with Disabilities
TLCs	Temporary Learning Centres
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCROC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
USA	United States of America
VDC	Village Development Committee
VLDIC	Village Level Disability Identification Committee

Appendix 1: Timeline

234

Appendix 2: Information sheet for government officer

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Information sheet for government officer

Date:

Name:

Designation:

Address:

Research title: Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Mukti Prakash Thapaliya, and I am a teacher educator from Nepal who is a doctoral student at School of Educational Studies and Leadership at College of Education in University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, conducting research under the supervision of Associate Prof. Dr. Missy Morton and Trish McMenamin. My study is **“Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools”**. The aim of this, in-depth ethnographic, case study is to explore primary level teachers’, school principal, parents’ and students’ with and without disabilities understandings, experiences, perspectives and feelings towards inclusive education policies and practices. This research findings will be very beneficial for Nepali teachers, students and policy makers to influence further policy development including continuing to refine teacher education and professional learning for inclusive education.

I intend to explore your understandings, experiences, perspectives and feelings towards inclusive. I also purpose to explore the successes and challenge the school face with inclusive education. Furthermore, it will also explore primary level teachers' perspectives and practices towards inclusive education policy and practices. It will try to identify opportunities and barriers in managing inclusive classroom.

I would like to invite you to participate in the present study. If you agree to do so you, you will be asked to take part in an interview with me in which we will discuss your role, perspectives, beliefs and experience of inclusive education policy and practice as a government officers of DoE. The interview session will take place in a mutually agreed place and should be between 1-2 hours in duration. The interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information and transcribed for analysis if you give permission. However, if you do not agree to the recording of the interview, you can provide your response in a written form.

I would also like your permission to examine government documents which are related to inclusive education policy and practices.

Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary. If you do participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw, I will do my best to remove any information relating to you, provided this is practically achievable.

I will take particular care to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. I will also take care to ensure your anonymity in publications of the findings. Neither your name nor your school name will be published in any thesis or report resulting from this study; pseudonyms will be used to maintain the anonymity of participants.

All the data will be securely stored in password protected facilities and locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. After that time all written

information related to this study and your participation in it will be destroyed. The results of the study may be submitted for publication to national or international journals or presented at conferences. If you desire, you will receive a report on the findings of this study and a copy of any resulting publication in your email id.

This study has been reviewed and approved by University of Canterbury of Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

If you have any further queries about the present study, please contact me. You can reach to me through the following emails mukti.thapaliya@pg.canterbury.ac.nz and mpt47@uclive.ac.nz or by the following phones: +64 22 171 0864 (NZ), +977 9841 44 3131 (Nepal) and +977 1 4 388 174 (Nepal).

If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact either the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) or Prof. Dr. Basudev Kafle, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal, basukafle53@yahoo.com.

Please complete the attached consent form and put in the envelope provided if you ready to participate in this study. I will pick up the consent form from the school by 10th May 2015.

With Kind Regards,

Mukti Prakash Thapaliya

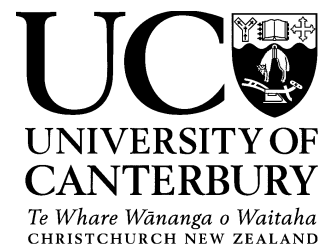
Ph.D. Candidate

School of Educational Studies and Leadership

University of Canterbury, Private Bag, 4800, Christchurch, New Zealand

Appendix 3: Information sheet for school administrator

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Information sheet for school administrator

Date:

Name:

Designation:

Address:

Research title: Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Mukti Prakash Thapaliya, and I am a teacher educator from Nepal who is a doctoral student at School of Educational Studies and Leadership at College of Education in University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, conducting research under the supervision of Associate Prof. Dr. Missy Morton and Trish McMenamin. My study is “**Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools**”. The aim of this, in-depth ethnographic, case study is to explore primary level school teachers’, school principal, parents’ and students’ understandings, experiences, perspectives and feelings towards inclusive education policies and practices. This research findings will be very beneficial for Nepali teachers, students and policy makers to influence further policy development including continuing to refine teacher education and professional learning for inclusive education.

I intend to explore your understandings, experiences, perspectives and feelings towards inclusive. I also purpose to explore the successes and challenge the school face with inclusive education. Furthermore, it will also explore primary level school teachers’ perspectives and practices towards inclusive education policy and practices. It will try to identify opportunities and barriers in managing inclusive classroom.

I would like to invite you to participate in the present study. If you agree to do so you, you will be asked to take part in an interview with me in which we will discuss your role, perspectives, beliefs and experience as the principal of a school moving towards inclusive education. The interview session will take place in a mutually agreed place and should be between 1-2 hours in duration. The interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information and transcribed for analysis if you give permission. However, if you do not agree to the recording of the interview, you can provide your response in a written form.

I would also like your permission to examine school documents which are related to inclusive education policy and practices such as the inclusive policy.

Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary. If you do participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw, I will do my best to remove any information relating to you, provided this is practically achievable.

I will take particular care to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. I will also take care to ensure your anonymity in publications of the findings. Neither your name nor your school name will be published in any thesis or report resulting from this study; pseudonyms will be used to maintain the anonymity of participants.

All the data will be securely stored in password protected facilities and locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. After that time all written information related to this study and your participation in it will be destroyed. The results of the study may be submitted for publication to national or international journals or presented at conferences. If you desire, you will receive a report on the findings of this study and a copy of any resulting publication in your email id.

This study has been reviewed and approved by University of Canterbury of Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

If you have any further queries about the present study, please contact me. You can reach to me through the following emails mukti.thapaliya@pg.canterbury.ac.nz and mpt47@uclive.ac.nz or by the following phones: +64 22 171 0864 (NZ), +977 9841 44 3131 (Nepal) and +977 1 4 388 174 (Nepal).

If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact either the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) or Prof. Dr. Basudev Kafle, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal, basukafle53@yahoo.com.

Please complete the attached consent form and put in the envelope provided if you ready to participate in this study. I will pick up the consent form from the school by 8th April 2015.

With Kind Regards,

Mukti Prakash Thapaliya

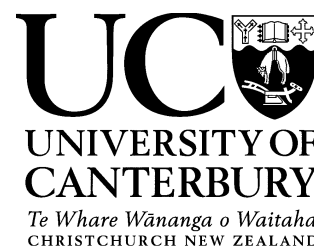
Ph.D. Candidate

School of Educational Studies and Leadership

University of Canterbury, Private Bag, 4800, Christchurch, New Zealand

Appendix 4: Information sheet for school teacher

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Information sheet for Teacher

Date:

Name:

Designation:

Email:

Research title: Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Mukti Prakash Thapaliya, and I am a teacher educator from Nepal who is a doctoral student at School of Educational Studies and Leadership at College of Education in University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, conducting research under the supervision of Associate Prof. Dr. Missy Morton and Trish McMenamin. The aim of this, in-depth ethnographic, case study is to explore primary level teachers', school principal, parents' and students' understandings, experiences, perspectives and feelings towards inclusive education policies and practices. This research findings will be very beneficial for Nepali teachers, students and policy makers to influence further policy development including continuing to refine teacher education and professional learning for inclusive education.

I would like to invite you to participate in the present study. I intend to explore your understandings, experiences, perspectives and feelings towards inclusive education policy and practices. I also try to identify opportunities and barriers in managing inclusive classroom.

You will be interviewed and observed your classes during March- July, 2015 about 3 hours and 7.5 hours respectively. The interview session would take place in a mutually agreed place. The interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information and transcribed for analysis if you give permission. If you do not agree for audio-record for interview, you can response exactly in the same words in the written form too. You will be interviewed in the following schedule:

How long	When	Where	How many times
40-45 minutes	Before the participation observation	the Mutually agreed place	1
40-45 minutes	Before the first term exam	Mutually agreed place	2
40-45 minutes	After the first term exam	Mutually agreed place	1

Your class will be observed 10 times about 7.5 hours during March-June, 2015. I would like to see your lesson plans, teaching aids, Individual Education Plan (IEP) and other related materials.

Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary. If you do participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw, I will do my best to remove any information relating to you, provided this is practically achievable.

I will take particular care to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. I will also take care to ensure your anonymity in publications of the findings. Neither your name nor your school name will be published in any thesis or report resulting from this study; however pseudonyms will be used to maintain the anonymity of participants.

All the data will be securely stored in password protected facilities and locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. After that time all written information related to this study and your participation in it will be destroyed. The results of the study may be submitted for publication to national or international journals or presented at conferences. If you desire, you will receive a report on the findings of this study and a copy of any resulting publication in your email id.

This study has been reviewed and approved by University of Canterbury of Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. If you have any further queries about the present study, please contact me. You can reach to me through the following emails mukti.thapaliya@pg.canterbury.ac.nz and mpt47@uclive.ac.nz or by the following phones: +64 22 171 0864 (NZ), +977 9841 44 3131 (Nepal) and +977 1 4 388 174 (Nepal).

If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact either the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) or Prof. Dr. Basudev Kafle, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal, basukafle53@yahoo.com.

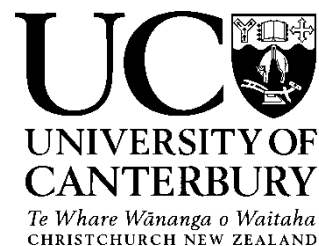
Please complete the attached consent form and put in the envelope provided if you ready to participate in this study. I will pick up the consent form from the school by 15th April, 2015.

With Kind Regards,
Mukti Prakash Thapaliya

Ph.D. Candidate
School of Educational Studies and Leadership
University of Canterbury, Private Bag, 4800, Christchurch, New Zealand

Appendix 5: Information sheet for parent/caregiver

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अभिभावकको लागि जानकारीमूलक चिठी

Research title: Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools

आदरणीय अभिभावक ज्यू,

मेरो नाम मुक्ति प्रकाश थपलिया हो र म हाल क्यान्टवरी विश्वविद्यालय, काईष्टर्च, न्यूजील्यान्डमा शिक्षाशास्त्र संकाय अन्तर्गत “**Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools**” अनुसन्धानात्मक शिर्षक माथि प्रोफेसर डा. मिसी मोर्टन र दिस एमसिमनिमन को मातहतमा विद्यावारिधी गरिरहेको छु ।

यस अनुसन्धानको मुख्य उद्देश्य समाहित शिक्षाका नीतिनियमहरूलाई प्राथमिक विद्यालयमा के कसरी कार्यान्वयन गरेका छन् भन्ने हो । यस अनुसन्धानले प्राथमिक विद्यालयका अंग्रेजी शिक्षकहरू, प्रधानाध्यापक, अभिभावकहरू र विद्यार्थीहरूको समाहित शिक्षाको नीतिनियमहरू प्रति के कस्तो अनुभव, बुझाई, र दृष्टिकोणहरू रहेका छन् भन्ने बारेमा अध्ययन गर्नेछ । यस अनुसन्धानको नतिजाले के कसरी नेपालमा समाहित शिक्षाको नीति, नियमलाई निर्माण गर्ने र समाहित शिक्षालाई व्यवसायिक शिक्षण सिकाई क्रियाकलापकालागि प्रयोग गर्न सकिनेछ ।

म तपाईंलाई यस अनुसन्धानमा संलग्न हुनको लागि हार्दिक अनुरोध गर्दछु । यदि तपाईं यस अनुसन्धानमा समावेस हुन ईच्छुक हुन्छ भने, तपाईंले समूहमा ६ जना अभिभावकहरूसँग विद्यालयमा ४० वा ४५ मिनेट सम्म छलफल गर्नु पर्नेछ । उक्त ‘छलफल शिक्षक, शिक्षिका र विद्यालय प्रशासनले तपाईंहरूको बालबालिकामा कस्तो दृष्टिकोण राख्दछन्?’ भन्ने बारेमा आधारित रहनेछ । छलफल गरेको कुरालाई फिलिप चार्ट पेपरमा उतारिनेछ ।

यहाँको यस अनुसन्धानमा स्वेच्छिक संलग्नता हुने भएकोले जति बेला पनि यस अनुसन्धानबाट बाहिरिन सक्नुहुनेछ ।

यस अनुसन्धानबाट अलग्गिएमा यहाँले दिनुभएको सूचनाहरूलाई पूर्णरूपमा निस्तेज गरिने छ । यहाँको वास्तविक नाम राखेर केही पनि प्रकाशन गरिने छैन तर काल्पनिक नाम राखेर भने प्रकाशन गर्न सकिनेछ ।

यहाँले दिएको सूचनाहरूलाई ५ वर्ष सम्म क्यान्टवरी विश्वविद्यालयको अत्याधुनिक कम्प्युटरमा सुरक्षित राखिने छ । ५ वर्ष पछि पूर्ण रूपमा सम्पूर्ण सूचना निस्तेज गरिने छ । यस अनुसन्धानको नतिजाहरूलाई राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तराष्ट्रिय जरनल, सेमिनार, कन्फरेन्स तथा विद्यावारिधीको थेसिस प्रकाशनको लागि प्रयोग गरिने छ । यदि यहाँ चाहानु हुन्छ भने यस अनुसन्धानका नतिजाहरूको एक प्रति यहाँको इमेल ठेगानामा पठाइनेछ ।

यस अनुसन्धानलाई एडुकेशनल रिसर्च हयुमन इथिक्स कमिटि, क्यान्टवरी विश्वविद्यालय बाट मूल्यांकन गरि अनुसन्धान गर्न मान्यता प्राप्त छ ।

यदि यहाँलाई यस अनुसन्धानको बारेमा केही बुझ्न मन लागेमा यहाँले मलाई मेरो तलको इमेल ठेगानामा वा फोन नम्बरमा सम्पर्क गर्न सक्नु हुनेछ । mukti.thapaliya@pg.canterbury.ac.nz and mpt47@uclive.ac.nz or +६४ २२ १७१ ०८६४ (न्यूजील्यान्ड मो.), + ९७७ ९८४१ ४४३१३१ (नेपाल, मो.), + ९७७ १ ४ ३८८ १७४ (नेपाल, घर)। यदि यहाँलाई यस अनुसन्धानको बारेमा उजुरी गर्नु परेमा, यहाँले प्रोफेसर डा. वासुदेव काफ्ले, त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय, किर्तिपुर, नेपाल वा प्रमुख, एडुकेशनल रिसर्च हयुमन इथिक्स कमिटि, क्यान्टवरी विश्वविद्यालय, प्राइभेट ब्याग, कार्डिफर्च, ४८००, (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) सम्पर्क गर्न सक्नु हुनेछ ।

यदि यस अनुसन्धानमा संलग्न हुन ईच्छा लागेमा, कृपया यससाथ संलग्न गरिएको स्वीकृती फारम भरि खाममा राखि मलाई २०१५ अप्रिल ८ गते (वि. सं. २०७२ वैशाख २ गते) सम्ममा विद्यालयमा फिर्ता पठाई दिनु होला ।

धन्यवाद

मुक्ति प्रकाश थपलिया

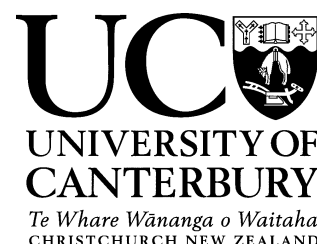
पिएच.डी. क्यान्डिडेट

स्कूल अफ एडुकेशनल स्टडिज एण्ड लिडरसिप

क्यान्टवरी विश्वविद्यालय, प्राइभेट ब्याग, ४८००, कार्डिफर्च, न्यूजील्यान्ड

Appendix 6: Information sheet for students

mpt47@uclive.ac.nz
mukti.thapaliya@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
+64221710864 (NZ)
+977 9841 443131, +977 1 4388 174 (Nepal)



Information sheet for students

Research title: Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools

Dear Students,

I am Mukti Prakash Thapaliya. I am a student of University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand. As part of my study, I propose to research how school and teacher implement inclusive education policy and practices in inclusive school.

I would like to invite you to participate in the present study. If you agree to take part, you will be asked to participate in a focus group discussion with six other students. The focus group session will take place at the school and it is expected that it will take approximately 40 minutes.

You will talk about your learning experiences and the activities you are doing in the school with your friend in discussion. Your comments and discussion will be recorded in writing on a large sheet of paper or chart during the session.

It is not necessary to answer every question. You have right to answer or not to answer of any question in the meeting. If you think you are unable to participate in the meeting that is fine. As a participant in the group interview, you will be asked to treat what is shared in confidence.

I will not tell about you, your mother's or father's, teacher's name, your school work and feelings if I talk with other people.

If you want to know more about the present study, you can ask with your mother or father or teacher or me.

If you change your mind and do not want to take part in the present study, you can leave it. But you have to tell your mother or father or teacher or me.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury of Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact either the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) or Prof. Dr. Basudev Kafle, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal, basukafle53@yahoo.com.

Please complete the attached consent form and put in the envelope provided if you ready to participate in this study. I will pick up the consent form from the school by 8th April, 2015.

With Kind Regards,

Mukti Prakash Thapaliya

Ph.D. Candidate

School of Educational Studies and Leadership

University of Canterbury, Private Bag, 4800, Christchurch, New Zealand

विद्यार्थीको लागि जानकारीमूलक चिठी

Research title: Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools

प्रिय विद्यार्थी भाईबहिनीहरू,

मेरो नाम मुक्ति प्रकाश थपलिया हो र म हाल क्यानटवरी विश्वविद्यालय, काईष्टर्च, न्यूजील्यान्डमा शिक्षाशास्त्र संकाय अन्तर्गत

“Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools” अनुसन्धानत्मक शिर्षक माथि प्रोफेसर डा. मिसी मोर्टन र ट्रिस एमसिमेनिमन को मातहतमा विद्यावारिधी गरिरहेको छु ।

यस अनुसन्धानको मुख्य उद्देश्य समाहित शिक्षाका नीतिनियमहरूलाई प्राथमिक विद्यालयमा के कसरी कार्यान्वयन गरेका छन् भन्ने बारेमा अध्ययन गर्नेछ । अतः यस अनुसन्धानले प्राथमिक विद्यालयका अंग्रेजी शिक्षकहरू, प्रधानाध्यापक, अभिभावकहरू र विद्यार्थीहरूको समाहित शिक्षाको नीतिनियमहरू प्रति के कस्तो अनुभव, बुझाई, र दृष्टिकोणहरू रहेका छन् भन्ने बारेमा अध्ययन गर्नेछ । यस अनुसन्धानको नतिजाले नेपालमा समाहित शिक्षाको नीति, नियमलाई के कसरी निर्माण गर्नु पर्दछ । यस अध्ययनले व्यवसायिक शिक्षण सिकाई क्रियाकलापका उपलब्धिहरूलाई स्थायीत्वकरण गर्न सहयोग गर्दछ ।

म तिमीलाई यस अनुसन्धानमा संलग्न हुनको लागि हार्दिक अनुरोध गर्दछु । यदि तिमी यस अनुसन्धानमा समावेश हुन ईच्छुक छौ भने, तिमीले समूहमा ६ जना साथीहरूसँग विद्यालयमा ४० वा ४५ मिनेट सम्म छलफल गर्नु पर्नेछ । उक्त ‘छलफल शिक्षक, शिक्षिका र विद्यालय प्रशासनले तिमीहरूलाई कस्तो दृष्टिकोणले हेर्दछन्?’ भन्ने बारेमा आधारित रहनेछ । छलफल गरेको कुरालाई फिलिप चार्ट पेपरमा उतारिनेछ ।

तिम्रो यस अनुसन्धानमा स्वेच्छिक संलग्नता हुने भएकोले जति बेला पनि यस अनुसन्धानबाट बाहिरिन सक्नेछौ । यस अनुसन्धानबाट अलग्गिएमा तिमीले दिएको सूचनाहरूलाई पूर्णरूपमा निस्तेज गरिने छ । तिम्रो वास्तविक नाम राखेर केही पनि प्रकाशन गरिने छैन तर काल्पनिक नाम राखेर भने प्रकाशन गर्न सकिनेछ ।

तिमीले दिएको सूचनाहरूलाई ५ वर्ष सम्म क्यानटवरी विश्वविद्यालयको अत्याधुनिक कम्प्युटरमा सुरक्षित राखिने छ । ५ वर्ष पछि पूर्ण रूपमा सम्पूर्ण सूचना निस्तेज गरिने छ । यस अनुसन्धानको नतिजाहरूलाई राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तराष्ट्रिय जर्नल, सेमिनार, कन्फरेन्स तथा विद्यावारिधीको थेसिस प्रकाशनको लागि प्रयोग गरिने छ । यदि तिमी चाहान्छौ भने यस अनुसन्धानका नतिजाहरूको एक प्रति तिम्रो इमेल ठेगानामा पठाइनेछ ।

यस अनुसन्धानलाई एडुकेशनल रिसर्च हयुमन इथिक्स कमिटी, क्यानटवरी विश्वविद्यालय बाट मूल्यांकन गरि अनुसन्धान गर्न मान्यता प्राप्त छ ।

यदि तिमीलाई यस अनुसन्धानको बारेमा केही बुझ्न मन लागेमा तिमीले मलाई मेरो तलको इमेल ठेगानामा वा फोन नम्बरमा सम्पर्क गर्न सक्नेछौ । mukti.thapaliya@pg.canterbury.ac.nz and mpt47@uclive.ac.nz or +६४ २२ १७१ ०८६४ (न्यूजील्यान्ड मो.), + ९७७ ९८४१ ४४३१३१ (नेपाल, मो.), + ९७७ १ ४ ३८८ १७४ (नेपाल, घर)

यदि तिमीलाई यस अनुसन्धानको बारेमा उजुरी गर्नु परेमा, तिमीले प्रोफेसर डा. वासुदेव काफ्ले, त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय, किर्तिपुर, नेपाल वा प्रमुख, एडुकेशनल रिसर्च ह्युमन इथिक्स कमिटी, क्यान्टवरी विश्वविद्यालय, प्राइभेट ब्याग, काईष्टर्च, ४८००, (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) सम्पर्क गर्न सक्नेछौ ।

यदि तिमीलाई यस अनुसन्धानमा संलग्न हुन ईच्छा लागेमा, कृपया यससाथ संलग्न गरिएको स्वीकृती फारम भरि खाममा राखि मलाई २०१५ अप्रिल ८ गते सम्ममा विद्यालयमा फिर्ता पठाई दिन अनुरोध गर्दछु ।

धन्यवाद ।

मुक्ति प्रकाश थपलिया
पिएच.डी. क्यान्डिडेट
स्कूल अफ एडुकेशनल स्टडिज एण्ड लिडरसिप
क्यान्टवरी विश्वविद्यालय, प्राइभेट ब्याग, ४८००, काईष्टर्च, न्यूजील्यान्ड

Appendix 7: Information sheet of parent permission for student participation

mpt47@uclive.ac.nz
mukti.thapaliya@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
+64221710864 (NZ)
+977 9841 443131, +977 1 4388 174 (Nepal)



Information sheet of parent permission for student participation

Research title: Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools

Dear Students,

I am Mukti Prakash Thapaliya. I am a student of University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand. As part of my study, I purpose to research how school and teacher implement inclusive education policy and practices in inclusive school. The aim of this, in-depth ethnographic, case study is to explore primary level teachers', school principal, parents' and students' understandings, experiences, perspectives and feelings towards inclusive education policies and practices. This research findings will be very beneficial for Nepali teachers, students and policy makers to influence further policy development including continuing to refine teacher education and professional learning for inclusive education.

I would like to request your permission to include your daughter or son in the study. If you give your permission of your son/daughter, he/she will be asked to participate in a focus group discussion with six other students. The focus group session will take place at the school and it is expected that it will take approximately 40 minutes. He/she will talk about his/her learning experiences and the activities s/he is doing in the school with his/her friend in discussion. His/her comments and discussion will be recorded in writing on a large sheet of paper or chart during the session.

I would also like to request your permission to observe Individual Education Plan (IEP) and other related materials of your son or daughter.

If you think you are unable to give permission of your son/daughter to participate in the focus group discussion that is fine.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury of Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact either the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) or Prof. Dr. Basudev Kafle, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal, basukafle53@yahoo.com.

Please complete the attached consent form and put in the envelope provided if you ready to participate in this study. I will pick up the consent form by 8th April 2015 from the school.

Thank you.

With Kind Regards,

Mukti Prakash Thapaliya

Ph.D. Candidate

School of Educational Studies and Leadership

University of Canterbury, Private Bag, 4800, Christchurch, New Zealand

Appendix 8: Consent form for government officer

mpt47@uclive.ac.nz
mukti.thapaliya@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
+64221710864 (NZ)
+977 9841 443131, +977 1 4388 174 (Nepal)



Consent form for the school administrator

Research title: Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools

I have read the information sheet about “**Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools**”. I agree and understand in the following points:

- I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been given an opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand and agree that I will be interviewed about 1-2 hours that will be audio recorded and transcribed.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any stage without penalty.
- I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me or my institution however pseudonym will be used.
- I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study. I have provided my email details below for this.
- I understand that I will give the permission to conduct the present study in the school.
- I understand that I will show the policy documents which are related to inclusive education.

If I need any further information about the present study, I will contact the researcher, Mukti Prakash Thapaliya.

If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact either the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) or Prof. Dr. Basudev Kafle, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal, basukafle53@yahoo.com.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Email:

Please return this complete consent form in the envelope provided by 10th May, 2015 that I will collect from the school.

Appendix 9: Consent form for school administrator

mpt47@uclive.ac.nz
mukti.thapaliya@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
+64221710864 (NZ)
+977 9841 443131, +977 1 4388 174 (Nepal)



Consent form for the school administrator

Research title: Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools

I have read the information sheet about “Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali primary school”. I agree and understand in the following points:

- I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been given an opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand and agree that I will be interviewed about 1-2 hours that will be audio recorded and transcribed.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any stage without penalty.
- I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me or my institution however pseudonym will be used.
- I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study. I have provided my email details below for this.
- I understand that I will give the permission to conduct the present study in the school.

- I understand that I will show the school documents which are related to inclusive education.

If I need any further information about the present study, I will contact the researcher, Mukti Prakash Thapaliya.

If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact either the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) or Prof. Dr. Basudev Kafle, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal, basukafle53@yahoo.com.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Email:

Please return this complete consent form in the envelope provided by 8th April, 2015 that I will collect from the school.

Appendix 10: Consent form for teacher

mpt47@uclive.ac.nz
mukti.thapaliya@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
+64221710864 (NZ)
+977 9841 443131, +977 1 4388 174 (Nepal)



Consent form for teacher

Research title: Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools

I have read the information sheet about “Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali primary school”. I agree and understand in the following points:

- I understand and agree that I will be interview four times for about 40-45 minutes and my class will be observed for 7.5 hours/ 10 classes during April- July, 2015 that will be audio recorded and transcribed.
- I understand that the researcher will see my lesson plans, teaching aids, Individual Education Plan (IEP) and other related materials.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw my consent at any time.
- I understand that any information or opinions I provided will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me or my institution however pseudonym will be used.
- I understand that all data from this research will be securely stored in password protected facilities and locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. After that time all written information related to this study and your participation in it will be destroyed.
- I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study and have provided my mailing/email details below for this purpose.

If I need any further information about the present study, I will contact the researcher, Mukti Prakash Thapaliya.

If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact either the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) or Prof. Dr. Basudev Kafle, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal, basukafle53@yahoo.com.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name:

Date:

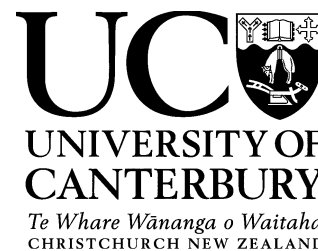
Signature:

Email:

Please return this complete consent form in the envelope provided by 8th Apr 2015 that I will collect from the school.

Appendix 11: Consent form for parent/caregiver

mpt47@uclive.ac.nz
mukti.thapaliya@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
+64221710864 (NZ)
+977 9841 443131, +977 1 4388 174 (Nepal)



अभिभावक वा केरिगभरको लागि Consent form

Research title: Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools

विद्यावारिदीका छात्र, school of Education Leadership and Studies, University of Canterbury,

Christchurch, New Zealand , मुक्ति प्रकाश थपलिया ले मलाई यस अनुसन्धानको बारेमा वर्णन गरेर र मैले तलका निम्न

लिखित बुदाँहरुको बारेमा बुजेर आफ्नो सहमति सहित दिएको छु :

- मलाई एक चोटि ४० मिनेट को लागि अर्न्तर्वाता लिइने छ जुन चाँहि चार्ट पेपरमा लेखिने छ ।
- मेरो participation voluntary हुनेछ र मैले जुनसुकै बेला पनि मेरो consent withdraw गर्न सक्नेछु ।
- मैले उपलब्ध गराएको सूचना वा मेरा धारणाहरुलाई अयलाष्मभलतष्वा राखिने छ तर अनुसन्धानकर्ताले काल्पनिक नाम राखेर प्रकाशन गर्न सक्नेछन् ।

मैले दिएको सूचनाहरुलाई ५ वर्ष सम्म University of Canterbury को अत्याधुनिक computer मा password ले लक गरेर राखिने छ । जुन यस अनुसन्धानको ५ वर्ष पछि पूर्ण रुपमा विनाश गरिने छ । यस अनुसन्धानको findings लाई राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तराष्ट्रिय जरनल, सेमिनार, कन्फेरेन्स तथा Ph.D. Thesis प्रकाशनको लागि प्रयोग गरिने छ । मैले चाहेमा यस अनुसन्धानको findings को एक प्रति मेरो इमेल Id मा पठाइनेछ जसको लागि मैले मेरो इमेल ID तल दिएको छु ।

यस अनुसन्धानलाई University of Canterbury को Educational Research Human Ethics Committee बाट मूल्यांकन गरि अनुसन्धान गर्न मान्यता प्राप्त छ ।

यदि मलाई यस अनुसन्धानको बारेमा केही बुझ्न मन लागेमा मैले तलको अनुसन्धानकर्ताको इमेल Id मा वा फोन नम्बरमा सम्पर्क गर्न सक्नेछु : mukti.thapaliya@pg.canterbury.ac.nz and mpt47@uclive.ac.nz or

+64 22 171 0864 (NZ), +977 9841443131 (Nepal), +977 1 4 388174 (Nepal)

यदि मलाई यस अनुसन्धानको बारेमा complain गर्नु परेमा, मैले प्रोफेसर डा. वासुदेव काफ्ले, त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय, किर्तिपुर, नेपाल वा Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) सम्पर्क गर्न सक्नेछु ।

म यस अनुसन्धानमा भाग लिनको लागि इच्छुक भएकोले, मैले तल आफ्नो नाम लेखि, हस्ताक्षर गरी दिएको छु ।

नाम:-----

भित्ति:-----

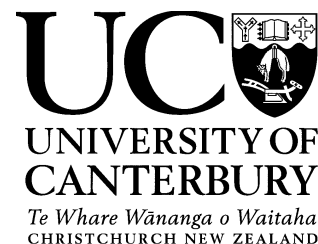
हस्ताक्षर: -----

इमेल:-----

कृपया यसमा संलग्न गरिएको consent form भरि खाममा राखि मलाई २०१५ न अप्रिल सम्ममा फिर्ता पठाई दिनु होला ।

Appendix 12: Consent form for student

mpt47@uclive.ac.nz
mukti.thapaliya@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
+64221710864 (NZ)
+977 9841 443131, +977 1 4388 174 (Nepal)



विद्यार्थीको लागि Consent form

Research title: Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools

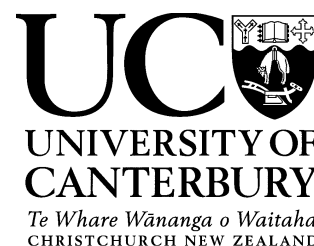
कृपया तलको बाक्समा (v) लगाउनुहोस ।

- ☐ मैले सुचनामुलक चिठी पढे र यदि मैले यस अनुसन्धानमा भाग लिए भने मैले के गर्नु पर्दछ भन्ने मलाई थाहछ ।
- ☐ मेरो participation voluntary हुनेछ र मैले जुनसुकै बेला पनि मेरो consent withdraw गर्न सक्नेछु ।
- ☐ मैले समूहमा ४० वा ४५ मिनेट को लागि छलफल गर्नु पर्दछ जुन चाँहि फिलिप चार्ट पेपरमा लेखिने छ ।
- ☐ मैले उपलब्ध गराएको सूचना वा मेरा धारणाहरुलाई confidential राखिने छ ।
- ☐ मैले उपलब्ध गराएको सूचना मेरो विद्यालयको वा मेरो नाम राखेर प्रकाशन गरिने छैन तर अनुसन्धानकर्ताले काल्पनिक नाम राखेर प्रकाशन गर्न सक्नेछन् ।
- ☐ मैले चाहेमा यस अनुसन्धानको फलमप्लनक को एक प्रति मेरो इमेल क्षम मा पठाइनेछ जसको लागि मैले मेरो इमेल क्षम तल दिएको छु ।
- ☐ यदि मलाई यस अनुसन्धानको बारेमा complain गर्नु परेमा, मैले प्रोफेसर डा. वासुदेव काफले, त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय, किर्तिपुर, नेपाल वा Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) सम्पर्क गर्न सक्नेछु ।

कृपया यसमा संलग्न गरिएको consent form भरि खाममा राखि मलाई २०१५ अप्रिल ८ गते सम्ममा फिर्ता पठाई दिनु होला ।

Appendix 13: Consent form for parent permission

mpt47@uclive.ac.nz
mukti.thapaliya@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
+64221710864 (NZ)
+977 9841 443131, +977 1 4388 174 (Nepal)



Consent form of parent permission of student participation

Research title: Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali higher secondary schools

I have read the information for the present study “Moving towards inclusive education: How inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepali primary school”

I am happy to send my son/daughter to participate in the focus group interview and the researcher can also observe my son/daughter Individual Education Plan (IEP).

I have understood this study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury of Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

I have understood if I have a complaint about the study, I may contact either the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) or Prof. Dr. Basudev Kafle, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal, basukafle53@yahoo.com.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Please return this complete consent form in the envelope provided by 8th April 2015 that I will collect from the school.

Appendix 14: Classroom observation

Classroom observation form

Code:

--	--	--

Observation No:

Date of observation:

Time:

	Boys	Girl
Total students		
Present		
Disable students		

Diagram – seating arrangement

--

A: Details of classroom activity:

--

B: Guideline for observing teaching-learning activities

S.N.	Criteria	Remarks
1	Warm up activities (before starting class how he/she motivates the students towards the present lesson)	
2	Professional skills and attitude (discipline, attitude, presentation, feedback)	
3	Plan (daily lesson plan)	
4	Knowledge of subject matter	
5	Communication (gestures, body language, pronunciation, eye contact)	
6	Teaching methods and techniques (using different teaching methods and techniques such as reciprocal, think/pair/share, collaborative teaching, so on)	
7	Classroom management (seating arrangement)	
8	Engagement	
9	Using teaching aids	
10	Evaluation	

Appendix 15: Field note

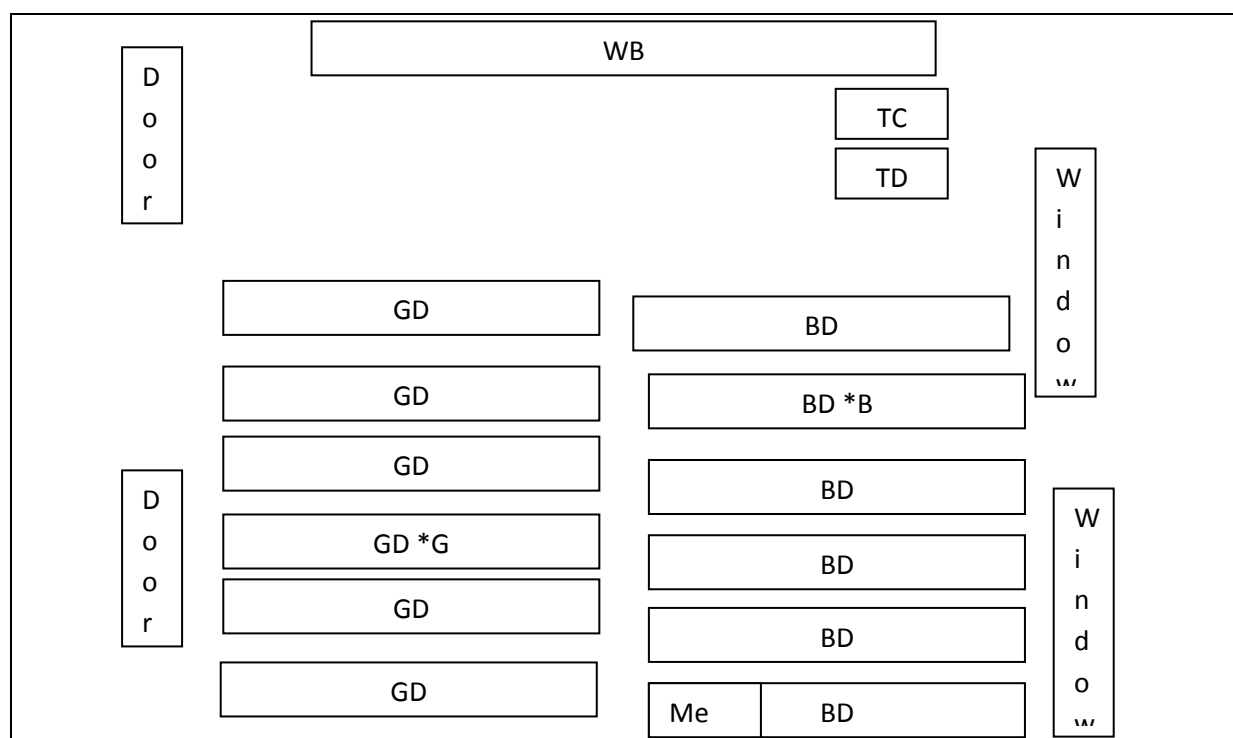
NHSS		
Day, date	:	19 th April, 2015
Location	:	School K A
Time	:	10.00 – 10:45
Main activity	:	Classroom activity observation
		Course: Nepali Class: VI Topic: “Guru”
Other activities	:	Conversation with Primary level school teacher (before and after the class)
Whom I Interact with	:	Primary level Nepali teacher Students with visual impaired Other students

Note:

- I reached school at 9:50 am. I noticed studnets were playing in the school ground and some teachers were reading newspaper and some were talking each other in front of staff room. The long bell rang at 10:00 am and all students and teachers were gathered in the ground for morning assembly. The morning assembly was over at 10:10 then all student went for their respective classroom. I found she was very happy today when I met her outside the staff room. I asked her about it. She said that her son was passed in Bachelor of Engineering (B.E.) in China with good marks. I also said that I would be happy if I passed any exam with good mark.
- When we were walking towards the classroom, she told me that she was nervous to have someone observe her class. I told her that I was not judging about her teaching and learning activities. I alos told her that I would also feel the same way if any one observed my class while I was teaching. I again assured her that the focus of the study was how primary level teachers perceived and practics teaching and learning activities in inlcusive classroom.
- I decided to take note on a paper notebook so that it would be less intrusive. I hoped to look like other studnets who took notes using their pens and note books.

The teacher started the class with morning prayer with classwise song and she introduced me as a lecturer of Gramin Adarsha Multiple Campus (GAMC) who would be in the class for a few periods. I sat at the last bench of boy's row. I immediately noticed that in this class students with the same gender shared a bench and desk.

The teacher looked at the attendance list and called students' roll number one by one. As she was doing this, I noticed that Santosh and Samita were sitting in two different benches. Santosh's friend was talking and whispering with Santosh. While she was taking attendance, I drew the sketch of the classroom that looked like this:



Notes on the layout:	
Door	Door
WB	White Board
TC	Teacher's Chair
TD	Teacher Desk
GD	Girl's Desk
BD	Boy's Desk
*B	Boy (with visual impairment, totally lost his sight)
*G	Girl (with visual impairment, totally lost his sight)

After drawing the sketch of the classroom outline, I had question in mind that I planned to ask to Santosh and Samina after the period:

1. Is the class arrangement is fixed or do students get to move?
2. What made Santosh and Samina decide to sit where they are sitting?

After taking the attendance, she wrote in the topic of the present lesson on the white board by asking student to open their book page number 1 of their text book. She came at the Samin's desk and talked but I did not hear what they talked at the last. However, Samina looked happy and she was smiling.

The lesson began with a recap of previous lesson what they learned. She told about the importance of poem. The teacher asked the question for class, "What does poem mean/ Kabita in Nepali? The boy who had round face answered the question. After that she asked Santosh, "Could please recite me a poem of your own? He recited a poem which was in his language. After that she asked the same question for other students. Students shared their poem with her. Then she wrote the following words in the white board and asked students to compose a poem by using these words in their own words.

गुरु, हिमाल, समुद्र, नेत्र ज्ञान

(Teacher, himalaya, eye, sea and knowledge)

The student composed the following piece of poem in Nepali language

गुरुका मनमा चोट परे हिमाल भुक्दछ
गुरुका नेत्रमा आँसु देखे समुद्र सुक्दछ
माझी हो भै ढल्छ, ढुङ्गा ढुल्छ कुनै दिन
सम्झिनै पर्छ यात्रीले दियो सुन्दर जीवन

After that, she went to near Samina and asked about her poem. She shared her poem. It seemed that she was more concentrated on Samina and Santosh in the classroom activities. (She was trying to impress me by asking Santosh and Samina question in the review and warm up activities. I think that is why one observation is not enough.)

The prescribed textbook for this subject is “Our Nepali” is based on the revised curriculum of Basic Education of B.S. 2069 and published by Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), Sanathimi in Department of Education. Students had their own textbook and last bench girl student offered shared with last bench student. I thanked her.

After that she told students’ to open the “Guru” poem which was today’s topic from their book. She used drill techniques to teach this poem. Then, she recited the poem and requested the students to follow with her. I noticed Samina and Santosh were also following with her. After that, she asked one students to recite the poem appropriately. After that, she explained the poem by telling its meaning, I noticed Samina and Santosh were busy with writing while teacher was explaining the poem. Were they writing in Braille? I thought I would ask them this question later when I had the chance. I also found that a boy who was at the right elbow with Santosh read what the teacher wrote on the white board (Sometime he whispered to Santosh). I noticed one girl who was sharing the bench with Samina, also read text what teacher wrote on the white board (sometime she whispered to Samina). I could ask her later: a) was there any briefing before, at the beginning of academic year may be? b) How does h/she take the responsibilities?

Teacher and student had good relationship and classroom atmosphere was far from tense. Thus, student seemed relaxed. Similarly, I noticed some students were put their chin on the desk including Samina. The teacher was unhappy and she scolded students.

After that, she divided the class into two groups group A and group B. He requested to recite the poem for group A. After reciting the poem, the group B asked the question for group A. I noticed the teacher gave more. The teacher approached Santosh’s group. At first I was not sure if she was repeating her. Teacher told them to do exercise no. 1 and 2 from their book as homework.

Appendix 16: Semi-structured and focus-group prompts and interview guidelines

Date:

Code

Background of the participant

Respondent name:

Designation:

Age:

Sex:

Highest level of education:

Time of length of involvement in teaching job:

1. Have you ever taught a student with a disability?
2. The number of children with disabilities, type of disability, gender and age
3. How did they get an educational placement and enrol in this school?
4. Did children with disabilities get training before enrolment?
5. What are the barriers to education for a student with a disability?
6. How do you define Inclusive Education?
7. What are the existing policies of Inclusive Education?
8. Why do you think Inclusive Education is the best or worst move the government has made?
9. If you had a choice, would you allow the principal to admit learners who have barriers to learning?
10. What resources are available at your school to teach learners with learning problems?
11. What support do you receive from school, from the parent and from the department of education to enable you to be effective teachers?
12. What additional support would you like to receive in order to teach these learners effectively?
13. What in-service training did you receive for teaching learners with barriers to learning?

14. Where did you receive the training and for how long were you trained?
15. And if you were not trained - how long have you dealt with these learners?
16. What effect does your qualification have on your competency in teaching English/Mathematics/Science/Nepali/Social studies/Environment, population and Health Education/Nepali?
17. What changes did you encounter in teaching an inclusive classroom (that is with learners with barriers to learning)?
18. What changes would you like to see (being implemented) in your school to make inclusive education effective?
19. What methods do you use to accommodate all your learners in the classroom?
20. Which methods did you use before you were allocated all your learners in the classroom?
21. What pressure does an inclusive class put on you as an English/Nepali/Science teacher?
22. Personally, do you think there have been any changes in teaching that support inclusive classrooms?
23. What other materials can you advise teachers to use in order to be effective inclusive teachers?
24. What problems did you encounter when teaching learners with disabilities? How do you address these problems as a teacher?
25. In what other way can these challenges be addressed?

Appendix 17: Themes

Theme No	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6
1	Disability as a medical and a social problem	Educability of students	A sense of belonging
2	Disability as a matter of resource management	Explanation of educational failure	Empower students for democracy
3	Disability as a matter of charitable support	School response	Inclusive pedagogy
4	Burden	Theory of teaching expertise: No <i>Ratta</i> -No learning	Teachers' belief, knowledge and understanding of learners
5	Identity	Assessment model	Supported learning
6	Isolation	Curriculum model	Network
7	Stigmatisation		School culture

Appendix 18: Ethical approval letter



HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Secretary, Lynda Griffioen
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Ref: 2014/54/ERHEC

30 March 2015

Mukti Thapaliya
School of Educational Studies & Leadership
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Mukti

Thank you for your request for an amendment to your research proposal "Moving towards inclusive education: how inclusive education is understood, experienced and enacted in Nepalese primary schools" as outlined in your email dated 30 March 2015. I am pleased to advise that this request has been considered and approved by the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

Please note that should circumstances relevant to this current application change you are required to reapply for ethical approval.

If you have any questions regarding this approval, please advise.

We wish you well for your continuing research.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Surtees'.

Nicola Surtees
Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee

"Please note that Ethical Approval and/or Clearance relates only to the ethical elements of the relationship between the researcher, research participants and other stakeholders. The granting of approval or clearance by the Ethical Clearance Committee should not be interpreted as comment on the methodology, legality, value or any other matters relating to this research."

F E S

